



Lynsted with Kingsdown
Society

They Shall Grow Not Old

*The stories of the men
of Lynsted with Kingsdown
who gave their lives in the
First World War*



LED BY IWM

Written and compiled by Elisabeth Heriz-Smith

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*The stories of the men of the parish of
Lynsted with Kingsdown
who gave their lives in the First World War*



Memorial to the casualties of Lynsted with Kingsdown in the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Lynsted

Written and compiled by Elisabeth Heriz-Smith



*Dedicated to the memory of my great-uncle
Private 6837, David Field, 71st Company (6th Division), Machine Gun Corps
(formerly G/7145 Royal Sussex Regiment)*

Died of wounds 26 April 1917, aged 27.

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I spent my formative years growing up in a town that housed not only an army garrison but also a naval base, large naval hospital and home for retired and disabled sailors. Perhaps it is not surprising that the effects of war did not look unusual to me. It was a daily occurrence to see disabled and disfigured men. We would often visit elderly, long-widowed ladies or spinster aunts living alone in dark Edwardian style houses. Homes where, proudly displayed over the mantel, were large sepia photographs draped in black ribbon of a man in uniform. It was normal for neighbours to look out for these women who seemed to have no family of their own to hand. The regular visits to my grandfather's grave in the local cemetery took me past approximately 1,300 Commonwealth War Graves. All this seemed normal. There was no reason to ask questions. Nobody spoke of war. Indeed, it was only a year before my father died in 1996 that he spoke to me of his own experiences in World War Two.

Times were different. Few wore their hearts on their sleeves and mourning was done in private. This was hardly surprising when you take a look at a local example. The distribution of casualties in Greenstreet alone illustrates the situation (see page 325 for a map showing the distribution of losses). How could you seek comfort when your friends, relatives and neighbours were mourning their own losses or still praying for the safety of their loved ones still facing battle?

For some, the loss of a husband or child meant their own fight had just begun. Living in tied housing and losing the breadwinner meant that many women's first priority was keeping a roof over the family's head and putting food on the table. Children would have been spared the details. Indeed, the next of kin were often themselves spared the details.

So, it comes as no surprise to me that so many stories of the men who fell in the Great War have become largely invisible with the passage of time. This appears to be most common where men died young and without issue. Soon, even the generations of those of us who knew survivors of the Great War will be lost too. I have been moved to conduct this research, in part, from the echoes in my own family tree; mere whisperings about my great-uncle, David Field, an agricultural labourer and machine-gunner whose story stopped with his appearance on a war memorial in Chiddingfold, East Sussex.

So many of the casualties in the Great War came from humble backgrounds. In the normal course of events they would have passed with barely a ripple; perhaps fleetingly recorded in newspaper accounts of sporting, horticultural, entertainment, church or agricultural achievements. For the most part, soldiers' names are frozen around the country in stone, wood, and parchment – sometimes with their fighting unit or, sometimes, their ages. Enduring commemoration of the fallen was seen as an essential step by those left at home; widely discussed in newspapers and by the Government, the planning began while the war progressed. Sadly, for many different reasons, some Memorials are incomplete and names of some soldiers were overlooked.

It is generally agreed that these centenary commemorations will mark the last national remembrance for these men and their families; the First World War will be consigned to distant history. Against this background, the Lynsted with Kingsdown Society decided to support this project to research and commemorate the stories of those who would not otherwise be recorded.



A frequent comment heard in our community is that this small rural parish of Lynsted with Kingsdown suffered a disproportionate number of losses. This distinction was recognised even back in 1917. A piece in the East Kent Gazette on 2 June 1917 reported:

LYNSTED – A PROUD RECORD

In the parish of Lynsted there are 280 inhabited houses, and with the exception of five public houses, and about a dozen other small businesses, the occupation of the community is purely agricultural. At the last census the population of the parish was 1,100, and the males of all ages numbered 529. Out of this number as many as 196 men have joined the Forces. Every farmer or man who holds a piece of land having sons of military age, has one or two who are serving, with the exception of only one farmer, and his son, who is just 18, will be joining up in October. This is the record of which the parish might well be proud.

By the time this article was published, 20 men had already been lost.

Exploring these mens' lives and their wartime experiences has given rise to a range of emotions, mostly formed with the value of hindsight. Frustration with the willingness of boys to lie about their ages to get to foreign soil. Incomprehension as to how they coped with their fear. The wonder of how they dealt with the sights and sounds they would endure. Anger at the foolishness and waste of war. I have been humbled by their stories and honoured to have been allowed into their lives, often with the generous help of family records and personal recollections of descendants.

I do not pretend to be an historian nor an accomplished author, and due to physical limitations my searches have not been exhaustive. I have recorded the stories of the casualties in chronological order of their deaths. In addition to telling the stories of the men, I hope this approach gives an insight into the progress of the war. I do hope that I have captured enough to enable our young men to be remembered as more than a name on a Memorial. Now, when looking up at the memorial in the Church of St Peter and St Paul in Lynsted, I do not view just a list of names. These boys and men are now so much more to me than simply a marble list. I hope they would feel I have told their story well enough. As a companion to this book, the Society has also produced a Book of Remembrance for display in a wonderful oak cabinet donated for the purpose by our Parish Council as a permanent feature.

We must remember too those who fought and survived. I cannot imagine that they would be the same again. Many did not return until well into 1919 by which time the country was no longer feeling celebratory. Others were being returned to France to undertake clear-up duties. The country was still suffering the Spanish Flu epidemic. Men returned to find their jobs had gone and poverty threatened. Women resented being cleared from the workplace. The country would take a long time to heal.

The war to end all wars? If only that had been true. Rest well my boys.

Elisabeth Heriz-Smith

Acknowledgements

The Society is indebted to the **First World War Centenary Partnership led by the Imperial War Museums**. The resources made available to us through this partnership in the production of this book and to our wider commemoration project was invaluable. Enabling us to screen the 1916 film “The Battle of the Somme” on the centenary of its filming allowed our community to come together to reflect on the importance of the centenary commemorations.

The Society is also very grateful to **Swale Borough Council** for its invaluable support via its ‘Member and WW1 Centenary Grant’ schemes which have supported the research and production of the book.

We thank those descendants of our casualties who have been generous in their time and permissions to use their personal stories and photographs, and where possible, checking our stories for accuracy:

David Aggersberg, nephew of Ernest Cecil Kemp, who has kindly allowed us to use his words and extensive knowledge of his uncle’s life.

Sally Coupland, great niece of Malcolm Philip Dalton.

James Gambell, nephew of Herbert David and Wilfred John Gambell.

Alan Godfrey, nephew of Frederick Godfrey.

Lucy Grayson and Kate Stew, great great nieces of MacDonald Dixon.

Rosemary Ivory, granddaughter of Thomas Henry Carrier and Thomas Wigg.

David Kerrell, great nephew of both Thomas Henry Carrier and Thomas Wigg.

Katherine Sutton, niece of William Allan Sewell.

Sadie Smith, granddaughter of Charles Alfred Tolhurst.

Julie Rutt, granddaughter of William Charles Drayson.

Thanks also go to **Keble College, Oxford University**, for permitting reproduction of their memorial photograph of William Allan Sewell. To **Marc Stewart** for providing photographs of the memorial at Keble College. To **Paul and Karen Fawcett** for taking time in their trips to WW1 battlefields to search out and photograph the headstones of our casualties. To **Peter Stevens** of the Faversham Society for pointing us in the direction of some valuable newspapers reports. To **Peter Tabor** for allowing us to reproduce part of his grandfather’s account of the first day of the Battle of the Somme. To the staff of **St Wulfram’s Church, Grantham**, for their kind assistance in allowing access to the Roll of Honour of the Machine Gun Corps. To those who contacted us to tell us about their visits to



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Acknowledgements

Commonwealth War Graves Cemeteries and War Memorials to honour their own relatives. Having heard of our project, they sought out the graves and names of the men of Lynsted with Kingsdown to pay their respects and lay a poppy.

The author should also like to thank the members of the **Lynsted with Kingsdown Society Committee and membership** for their support, assistance and encouraging words during the eight years of research and exhibition work. Also her husband who spent many hours transcribing pages of battalion war diaries, photography and supplying endless cups of coffee.

The Society is also grateful to the **clergy and churchwardens of the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Lynsted**, for their support in commemorating our war dead during services and allowing us to display the biographies of our casualties on the centenary of their death.

1914: The lamps are going out all over Europe



On the evening of 3 August 1914, Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, was sitting in his room overlooking St James' Park with his friend, John Alfred Spender, editor of the Westminster Gazette.

The gas lights along The Mall were being lit, when he uttered the now famous words:

***'The lamps are going out all over Europe,
we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime'.***

The next day Grey would have to face the Cabinet to persuade them that the time had now come to declare war on Germany.

At 11pm on 4 August 1914, Britain declared war on Germany.





Newspaper reports from home as war begins:

East Kent Gazette - 8 August 1914

GREENSTREET

POSTPONED. The annual demonstration and fete in connection with the Greenstreet Cooperative Society should have taken place on Wednesday next. The committee of the Society, however, in view of the outbreak of war and the state of national affairs, have decided to indefinitely postpone the function.

East Kent Gazette - 31st August 1914

LYNSTED – SUCCESSFUL EFFORT.

Miss Edith A. Filmer, of the Grange, Greenstreet, has just made a very successful house-to-house collection in Lynsted for the purpose of obtaining blankets for the troops. In houses where there were no blankets to spare the occupiers gave money, and as a result Miss Filmer collected 18 blankets, and £17/15/0 in money. Much of the latter amount was collected in pence at the cottage doors. Altogether Miss Filmer has distributed as follows: 21 blankets to the A Company of the 9th Middlesex Regiment, 40 to the F (Sittingbourne) Company of the 5th (Home Defence) Battalion The Buffs, and the other 29 will probably go to other companies of the 5th Buffs. Miss Filmer has worked hard in bringing about this great result, and she and the Lynsted folk who contributed so generously deserve hearty congratulations.

South Eastern Gazette - 19th September 1914

GREENSTREET RECRUITING RALLY

A recruiting rally was held on Monday evening on the Hill at Greenstreet, where an appeal was made to the young men of Teynham, Lynsted, and Norton to join the colours. The Union Jack and the French Tricolour had been mounted, and a numerous crowd assembled. Colonel J F Honeyball, JP, presided, and was supported by the Rev. L Goodenough (rector of Norton), Mr. A Faunce de Laune, JP (who himself has joined the East Kent Yeomanry), Mr F J Parrett, JP, Mrs Boyce, Mrs Honeyball, and others.

Colonel Honeyball said they were holding these meetings as far as practicable in all the parishes, at all events in all the larger parishes, with the object of giving information, of bringing home to everyone, if there was still anyone who did not realise it, the seriousness of the crisis through which this country was now passing, and of pointing out to those who were able – the young manhood of the country – what their duty was. He hoped that this meeting at Greenstreet would not be without the desired result. He did not say that these three parishes had failed in their duty hitherto; on the contrary there was a very large number of men belonging to them who were serving the King in some capacity or other – no less than eighty from the parish of Teynham alone.

Nevertheless, there were others who had not gone yet and who could go. The Rev L Goodenough said it might hardly seem possible that at this moment we were engaged in the greatest struggle which the world had ever known. Here we were in this country going about our usual business, getting in our harvests,



our fruit and our hops – really, some might ask, what difference does the war make? We might have to pay a penny more for our sugar, and there were exciting things to be read about in the newspapers, but it was difficult to realise that we were at war. We could thank God for the wonderful security of our position – a security which was due to that little strip of water which separated us from the Continent. But we must not trust too much to that security and leave everything to our magnificent Fleet and our comparatively small Army.

The burden was laid upon every one of us, and we had all in some way or other to bear our part. We were fighting for the freedom, not only for our land, but for the freedom of Europe, which was threatened with a slavery the peoples did not intend to bow down to – threatened in accordance with a long designed plan on the part of Germany to impose themselves on the whole of Europe. After a reference to the history of the war, the speaker said we must not think because we had had a few successful days we were going to get to the end of the war in a minute. We had to use every single effort to subdue the barbarous German nation, for “barbarous” was not too strong a term to use in view of what the German Army had been guilty of. Mrs. Boyce spoke especially to the women present. This war, she said, was one which concerned every woman in this country as much as it concerned every man. Women had, therefore, to do their part and not to cry and squirm if their sons wanted to enlist. If they did that she would say shame on womanhood.

The speaker emphasised the remark of the previous speaker that we must not think that we were at the end of the war because we had had one or two glorious victories. It was “a long, long way to Tipperary,” and it was a long, long way to Berlin, but to Berlin we had got to go and secure the terms we should demand. Colonel Honeyball and Mr. De Laune afterwards appealed to the young men present, who could do so, to join either Lord Kitchener's Army or one of the local Territorial units, and the proceedings concluded with cheers for the King and the Army and Navy.

East Kent Gazette - 28th November 1914

GREENSTREET. MEN WITH THE FORCES.

It is stated that no fewer than 150 men from the parishes of Teynham and Lynsted are now serving with His Majesty's forces. Of this number about 90 men are from Teynham, and the rest hail from Lynsted.

12th December 1914 – Faversham and North East Kent News

PARISHES OF NORTON, LYNSTED AND TEYNHAM

We give below completed lists of the men belonging to the parishes of Norton, Lynsted, and Teynham who are on active service. The Lynsted list, it will be noted, has the distinction of including, in Colonel Macdonough, a member of the Staff of Sir John French; the Norton list includes the Rector, Rev. L. Goodenough, who has obtained leave of absence from the parish to go on service as Chaplain with the Warwickshire Yeomanry; and the Teynham list includes two sons of Dr. Selby. In the Lynsted list there are also two sons of the Vicar (Rev. T.J. Sewell).



NORTON:- The Rev. L.W.V. Goodenough, Chaplain, Warwickshire Yeomanry; Robert Howard, R.N.; Charles Howard, R.N.; George Kitchingham, R.N.; Harry Burchett, The Buffs; Edward Luckhurst, The Buffs (T); Graeme Higgins, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry; Evelyn Freeman, Shropshire Light Infantry; Charles Odle, Grenadier Guards; George Brooker, R.N.

LYNSTED:- George Adsley, Engineer P.O.; Charles Bolton Atkins, stoker. James Bottle, Bombardier, R.F.A.; Charles Barton, Trooper, East Kent Yeomanry; Albert William Bassett, Sergeant Royal Berkshires; William J. Bird, Lance-Corporal, 5th The Buffs; George Back and Frederick Bailey, Privates, 4th The Buffs; Ernest Baker, stoker. Richard Elijah Croucher, leading stoker; Charles Carlton, Private, 6th The Buffs; Frederick Carlton, Private, 3rd The Buffs; Stanley Cleaver, Trooper, East Kent Yeomanry; Edward John Thomas Court, Private, 2nd Buffs; Walter Henry Croucher, Bombardier, Royal Horse Artillery; George Champion, Private,-----. Walter Ernest Dive, Private, 5th Buffs; Malcolm Dalton, Lance Corporal, East Kent Yeomanry. Arthur Leopold Ferrell, Private, 7th Buffs; Cecil Wilkins Gammon, gunner, R.N. Thomas Holden, Trooper, East Kent Yeomanry; A. Harold Hughes, leading stoker; William Hawkins, stoker; Edward Jordan, Trooper, 7th Dragoons. Charles Kirby, stoker P.O.; Albert John Kimber, 1st Class Stoker; Charles Kemp, stoker; Ernest Cecil Kemp, A.B.; John Kite, stoker P.O.; Joseph Kadwill, Private, 21st Lancers; Frederick Kemp, Private, 4th Buffs; Edgar Kingsnorth, Private, 5th Buffs; Albert Ernest Larkin, Lance-Corporal, 5th Buffs; Fritz Le Feaver, sick boy attendant. Colonel Macdonogh, Sir John French's staff; Captain McDougall, Army Service Corps; William Martin, Private, 4th Buffs; William Millen, Private, 9th Buffs. Sidney Ottaway, Private, 4th Buffs; Thomas Ottaway, Trooper, East Kent Yeomanry; Albert Payne, Private, -----; Henry James Peene, A.B. Frederick Charles Sewell, Private, C.U.O.T.C. [Cambridge University Officers' Training Corps]; W.A. Sewell, 2nd Lieutenant, Border Regiment; Charles Seagers, Sergeant, Marines; Ernest Seagers, sick boy attendant; Harry Saunders, writer, R.N.; Ernest Smith, steward, Naval Depot; Elvy Sims, Lance Corporal, 5th Dragoons; Frederick Savage, Private, Buffs; George Satten, Trooper, East Kent Yeomanry; Herbert Smith, Private, -----. Albert Townsend, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry; Alfred Tolhurst, Private, 1st Buffs; Frederick Tyrrell, Private, Grenadier Guards; John William Tumber, stoker; Frank Townsend, Lance Corporal, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. William Wreight, stoker P.O.; Richard Charles Weeks, gunner Royal Garrison Artillery; George Wiles, Trooper, East Kent Yeomanry.

TEYNHAM:- Thomas Alexander, stoker; Albert Back, stoker; Ernest Back, Private, Buffs (T); Arthur Albert Baker, Lance Corporal, Grenadier Guards; Henry Frederick Barnard, Private, Buffs; Ernest banks, Private, Buffs; Arnold Brooker, Private, West Kent Regiment; George Sidney Brooker, A.B.; ----- Burchett, Private, Buffs; Henry James Burnett, Chief P.O.; Lewis Burrows, A.B. Stephen Champ, Chief P.O.; Fergus William Christmas, Private, Middlesex Regiment; Albert Edward Christmas, boy artificer; Edwin Clemons, stoker; A. Cook, Private, Buffs; Walter Frederick Cork



Charles Alfred TOLHURST



Private, L/7881

1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

Killed in action 19 December 1914 Aged 30

Charles was the first Lynsted casualty of WW1, being killed in action in the early months of the war. Charles was born in Kingsdown in 1883, the third of 13 children of George and Jane Lucy Tolhurst (née Milner). His two older brothers were George and Frederick, and his younger siblings were Albert, Ada Jane, Lucy Annie, Elizabeth Ellen, Emily, Marion, Florence, Isaac and Valentine. Sadly Charles's mother died, probably whilst giving birth to her last child, Franklyn, in 1904 at the age of 44. The family lived at several addresses in Erriot Wood and Kingsdown. By the time of the 1911 Census, however, Charles's father was living in Yew Tree Cottages, Kingsdown, with two of his daughters, Lucy and Marion. The youngest child was living with his grandparents.

Records show that in May 1902 Charles joined the territorial army at Canterbury at the age of 18 years and 2 months and was assigned to 3rd Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). During 1902 he undertook 49 days of drill training. On 1 March 1904 he signed up as a full-time soldier and probably served for four to six years. This experience would prove crucial and led to his recall at the outbreak of war and his posting to France with the British Expeditionary Force.

Charles married Juliana (also known as Jaleane and laleane) May Randall Neaves on 5 January 1910 at St Margaret's Church, Wychling. In the 1911 Census he was working as a farm labourer and living in Anchor House (in recent years renamed The Old House), Lynsted, which at the time was split into three dwellings. With them were their first daughter Margaret May, born on 16 July 1910, and Jaleane's 9 year old sister, Elizabeth Ellen. Two more daughters followed, Lilian Rose on 7 August 1912, and Eva on 31 August 1913.

At 10.00pm on 4 August 1914, the order for mobilisation was issued. Charles was recalled and assigned to 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), which was to become part of the 16th Brigade, 6th Division of the British Expeditionary Force. Charles's short service was to be hard.

By 18 August the 6th Division came together in camps around Cambridge and Newmarket. The next 20 days were spent in intense training. During this time the locals took the soldiers to their hearts, putting together canteens and recreation rooms for their use. As with a lot of other troops, the men grew impatient to get to France as they feared that they would miss out on battle. This stemmed from the common belief that "it would all be over by Christmas".

On 8 September 1914, their journey to France began as the troops were taken by train to Southampton. They landed at St Nazaire on 9 September. There followed a long train journey to billets in Coulommiers, Mortcerf, Marles and Chaume, where they arrived on 12 September. The period 13 to 19 September was spent on a long march to the Aisne area to the Divisional Headquarters at Bazoches. Here they relieved troops who were exhausted from the big retreat from Mons, hard fighting on the Marne and the first few days of the Battle of the Aisne.

Between 19 September and 11 October, Charles took part in heavy fighting in the trenches along the Aisne, during which time 1,482 were killed. This battle saw the start of trench warfare. On 12 October the Division marched on to Hazebrouk, where the following day they went forward to Cassel by train.



The First Battle of Ypres started on 13 October and the following day Charles's Division reached the front line at Rue du Leet-Blanche Maison, just east of Bailleul. Over the next few days fighting was intense. The battalion war diary reports:

15-16 Oct	Crossed the River Lys at Sailly. During the night Steenwerck was occupied.
16 Oct	Line advanced to Rouge du Bout - Rue Dormoire.
17 Oct	Greneier-Chapelle d'Armentières reached without opposition.
18 Oct	After considerable fighting, line moved forward to west of Pèrenchies-l'Épinette.
19 Oct	Trench digging.
20 Oct	A massive German attack along the whole front line.
21 Oct	Line driven back.
22 Oct	Under intense attack, but held firm.
23 Oct	Repulsed an attack causing many enemy deaths (at least 300 reported dead in front of the line).
24-25 Oct	Continuous attack all day. Although line held, the situation was becoming critical.
25-26 Oct	During the night the line moved back about half a mile to prepared trenches in order to straighten line.
27-28 Oct	Line taken by the enemy during the night, but taken back in a counter-attack.
28-29 Oct	Night attack repulsed.
29-30 Oct	Strong attack during the night when trenches were captured, but retaken in a counter attack.

So ended the First Battle of Ypres with the loss of 4,696 men.

During November, active fighting died down and the Division was entrenched on the Armentières front from then until the end of February. During this time 3,950 soldiers were killed either by shelling or sniper fire. This period coincided with the emergence of a new enemy: November and December saw appalling weather. Trenches were water-logged and knee deep in mud. With a lack of warm clothing and inadequate food, troops were falling victim to frostbite and trench foot. The parapets of the trenches were so water-logged that they failed to act as a shield from sniper bullets and many men were lost.

One event that may have briefly lightened the mood was reported in some war diaries when, for

the first time since 1743, a reigning monarch visited the front line on the 2 December 1914. King George V, along with the then Prince of Wales (later to become Edward VIII), visited the British Expeditionary Force during a five day visit to troops.

It was reported at the time that the King was a little bemused when he inspected the troops to find them dressed in woolly balaclavas and emptied sandbag sacks, stuffed with straw, strapped around their putties. Possibly the cold and wet conditions in which the troops were fighting had not been fully recognised.

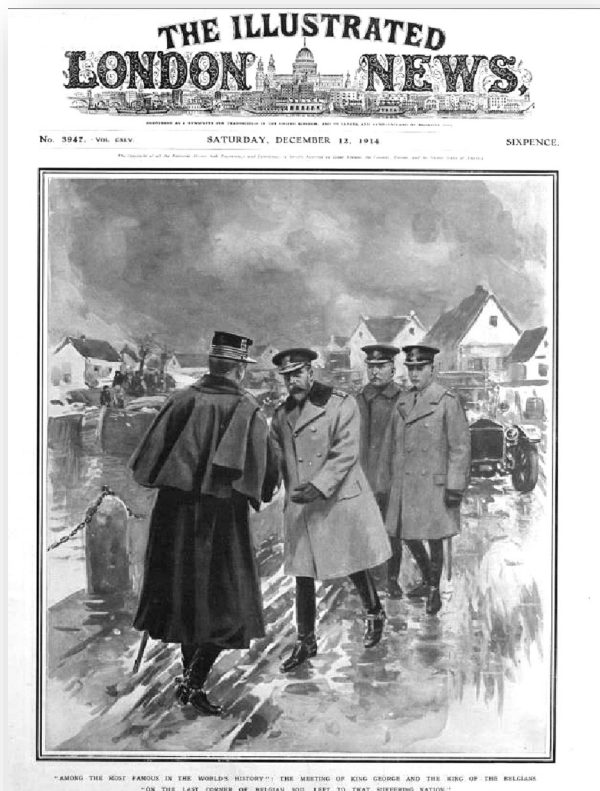
From The Times, 14 December 1914:

KING GEORGE'S OBSERVATION POINT

THE BATTLEFIELD NEAR YPRES (FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT) AMSTERDAM, Dec 12

The Sluis correspondent of the Telegraaf writes:-

English journals describe how King George viewed part of the battlefield near Ypres from a commanding point. From this point, indeed, one can see a wide stretch of Flanders and can distinguish clearly, as the frontier points of the panorama. Dunkirk, Roulers, Courtrai, and Lille. The ridge in front, with the village in ruins of which the English speak in their reports, lies close by there. It is on the line from Becelaere to Messines. On the left lies Ypres, almost as at the foot of the height and one distinguishes clearly the Cathedral and the Halle, the town's imposing building. The correspondents relate that east of Ypres the King saw the woods which witnessed the hardest fight in which British soldiers ever participated, and where so many British rest with their Allies. One does, indeed, see the wood of Zonnebeke and Becelaere along the railway from Ypres to Roulers. I spoke at the time of the breastworks of tree trunks, behind which machine guns rattled, and of attacks with armoured trains there. To the north coastwise the eye rests on the valley of Yperlee and the Yser.



*The King arriving in Belgium
Left to right: King Albert of Belgium, King George V,
Sir John French, Prince of Wales*



Only five days after this report was published in The Times, Charles was killed by a sniper's bullet - the only man of his battalion to die on 19 December 1914.

Charles's death was announced in the East Kent Gazette on 2 January 1915:

LYNSTED MAN KILLED AT THE FRONT.

Much sympathy will be felt for Mrs Tolhurst and family, of Ludgate Farm, Lynsted, who have been informed by the officer of his company that their husband and father was killed in action, in Flanders, on December 19th. The deceased was Private Alfred [sic] Tolhurst, of the 1st Battalion, The Buffs, and he was 29 years of age. He worked for Mr. W. Farmer, and, being a Reservist, was called up at the outbreak of the war. Private Tolhurst went through the battle of the Aisne, and he took part in the severe trench fighting in which the Buffs participated in Flanders. After their first severe stretch in the trenches the Buffs were relieved, and had a fortnight's rest. They returned to the trenches for another spell and on the second day at the fighting line Private Tolhurst was killed by a German sniper. He leaves a widow and three young children.

Charles's death was also announced in the Faversham and North East Kent News on 9 January 1915, following up with a fuller report on 6 February 1915:

LYNSTED

We recorded recently the death of Alfred Charles [sic] Tolhurst, of the 1st Batt. The Buffs, who was killed in action at the Front. In a letter to Mrs Tolhurst, Capt Hardy, commanding B Company wrote:- "..... He and I were trying to locate some German guns which were shelling our trenches. My eyes had got tired, I handed over the telescope to him and went away for a few minutes. A bullet came through the loop-hole and passed through his head, killing him instantly. I cannot tell you how deeply I sympathise with you and yours in your dreadful loss, but it must be some comfort to you to think that he died gallantly serving his country, and no man could have a finer death He will be sadly missed in the Company, both as a soldier and a good friend and companion." The deceased has left a wife and three young children.

Ironically, Charles's colleagues in the 1st Battalion, The Buffs, were to take part in the now famous Christmas Truce. Just one day after his death, soldiers from both sides were reported to be coming out of their trenches to bury their dead. Charles's body was buried by his colleagues, probably just behind the front line.

Charles was named again in the Faversham and North East Kent News in their Roll of Honour published on 7 August 1915 commemorating the anniversary of the outbreak of war.

In 1917, Charles was posthumously awarded the 1914 Star (colloquially known as the Mons Star). This medal was awarded to all men of the British and Commonwealth Forces who served with their unit in France and Belgium between 5 August 1914, and midnight of 22/23 November 1914. A bar clasp inscribed "5 Aug. to 22 Nov. 1914" was given to all those who qualified for the 1914 Star and who served under fire. The majority of the recipients of this award were members of the British Expeditionary Force, the survivors of which became known as "The Old Contemptibles". On 19



August 1914, the German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm is reported to have ordered his forces to "exterminate...the treacherous English and walk over General French's contemptible little army". Charles was also awarded the British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1]



Back home, Jaleane, pictured left in 1944, was left widowed with three young daughters. She remarried in December 1917 to Albert Henry Eason and, in 1918, gave birth to another daughter, Violet Louisa.

In 1917 Jaleane received £5 4s 6d (£5.22½p) in pay owed to Charles. In September 1919 she received his War Gratuity of £5. [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £545 in today's money.



Charles's daughters Eva and Margaret May with her husband Charles Thomas Butcher.

In February 1920, Jaleane received a letter from the Infantry Records Office stating:

"For various reasons it has been found necessary to exhume the bodies of soldiers in certain areas, and to re-inter them. Your late husband appears on the list reported and



Charles Alfred TOLHURST

his body has been removed and buried in Y Farm Military Cemetery, Bois Grenier, 3 miles south of Armentières.

The new grave has been duly marked with a cross bearing all particulars and is registered with the War Office.

The removal has been undertaken with every measure of care and reverence, and the re-burial conducted by a Military Chaplain."

Charles is buried in Y Farm Military Cemetery, Bois-Grenier, Nord, France, Grave Ref: E.54.

Jaleane died in 1976.

The Lynsted with Kingsdown Society is indebted to Sadie Smith, Charles's granddaughter, for her help in putting this story together and allowing us to use family photographs.



If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Rupert Brooke 1887-1915





Leading Stoker, K/1134
Royal Navy. HMS "Princess Irene"

Killed in the Princess Irene explosion 27 May 1915 Aged 30

Born Arthur Harold "Knight" in Chatham on 21 April 1885, Arthur was the adopted son of Henry, a yeoman labourer, and Mary Ann Hughes. The 1891 Census records show Arthur living at Fulston House in Bell Road, Sittingbourne, along with another adoptee, Florence M Gilham, and his father's brother Edward.

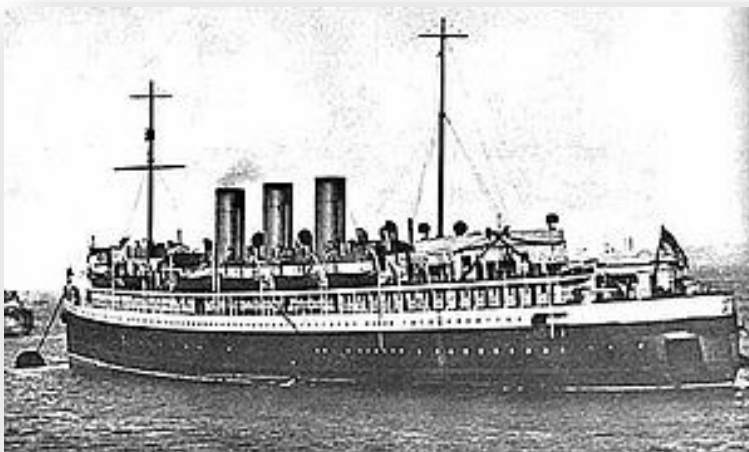
By the time of the 1901 Census, Arthur had moved with his adoptive parents to Bapchild Street, Bapchild, and was working with Henry as an agricultural labourer. His adopted sister, Florence, had married William England in Lynsted Church on Christmas Day 1897. Arthur was still using his birth name of Knight but was now recorded as a boarder rather than an adopted son.

The 1911 Census finds Arthur in the Royal Navy under his adoptive name of Hughes. He was serving on the First Class Armoured Cruiser, HMS Lancaster, under Commander Hugh Tothill, moored off Malta.

Arthur had left his job as a brickfield labourer and enlisted in the Royal Navy on 17 August 1908 for 12 years. All his naval records, apart from the record of his death, list his date of birth as 1887 rather than 1885, and his place of birth as Sittingbourne. He saw service on HMS Acheron, Sapphire, Hawke, Lancaster, Albion and Goliath.

On 22 December 1913, Arthur married Kate Kirby in Lynsted Church. Kate was working as housekeeper to the Headmaster of Lynsted School, Mr Ackermann, and was living in the School House. Kate and Arthur took up residence in Oak Cottages, Ludgate Lane.

At the outbreak of war, Arthur was serving on HMS Mars. On 1 February 1915, he was transferred to HMS Pembroke (the Chatham land base). This coincided with the birth of his daughter, Winifred Edith.



HMS Princess Irene

On 27 May 1915, Arthur was working on the HMS Princess Irene following her requisition and conversion to an auxiliary minelayer. She had originally been built for the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and launched on 20 October 1914. She now served out of Sheerness dockyard.

The Princess Irene was moored on No.28 buoy, off Port Victoria Pier in Salt Pan Reach, off Sheerness, where she was being loaded with 500 proximity mines for her first mine laying mission planned for 29 May. On board were all but three of



the ship's full complement and 77 Dockyard workers.

At 11.14am, HMS Princess Irene exploded and disintegrated. Eye witness reports say a column of flame leaped 300 feet high, followed a few seconds later by another explosion. A pall of smoke then hung over the spot where the Princess Irene had been, reaching to 1,200 feet. In total, 352 people were killed; all the ship's company and all but one of the dockyard workers perished. In addition, a girl of nine was killed by flying debris on the Isle of Grain, and a farmhand died of shock. A man working on another ship died from injuries sustained when he was struck by a piece of the Princess Irene's boiler weighing 70 pounds. The lone survivor of the explosion was dockyard worker, David Percy Wills, who escaped with severe burns.

The devastation went further afield. A colliery half a mile away had its crane blown off its mountings. It was reported that people in Sittingbourne and Bredhurst were injured by flying debris and, somewhat gruesomely and possibly apocryphally, there were reports of severed heads landing in Hartlip and the Isle of Grain. A case of butter landed at Rainham and was swiftly looted. A 10 ton section of the ship landed on the Isle of Grain, damaging the Admiralty's oil storage tanks. Wreckage was reported landing in a radius of 20 miles.

Unsurprisingly, only 10 bodies were recovered from the Princess Irene and they are buried at Woodlands Road Cemetery, Gillingham, alongside the remains of those killed on the HMS Bulwark, which exploded just 6 months earlier on 26 November 1914. Sadly, Arthur's body was not found but his wife would certainly have heard and felt the explosion from her home just a few miles away in Lynsted.

On 1 June 1915, a memorial service for the victims was held at the Dockyard Church, Sheerness, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson.

In the aftermath, an inquest was convened on just two victims of the disaster and it was agreed that the coroner would not hold additional inquests unless exceptional circumstances warranted it.

The day after the explosion, a Court of Enquiry was held at the Royal Naval Barracks in Chatham. Evidence was given that priming of the mines was being carried out hurriedly and by untrained personnel.

Ratings from the HMS Angora were called to explain to the Court how these mines were primed. Extracts from the minutes are as follows:

"In the ship that I am in, the Chief Electrical Artificer and the Chief Armourer cock the pistol and examine it. After that is done it is passed to the Torpedo Gunner's Mate - one Torpedo Gunner's Mate to each pair of mine rails. The priming party is stationed at a table between the mine rails, these men fitting the detonators into the primers. The fitted primer is then passed to the Torpedo Gunner's Mate who fixes it on the pistol, examining the pistol before fitting the primer. This is the routine carried out when we have time to do it, but as a rule, the thing is done at such a rush that you have to employ other people on the work in addition to the Torpedo Gunner's Mates..... Leading Torpedo Men and Seamen Torpedo Men."

The question was asked whether these men have been given training on this procedure:

"Instruction is given in the ship. There is also another point I should like to mention in regard to the priming. The priming is practically the last thing done after the mines are got on board and the men have practically worked 18 hours out of 24 and when it comes to the priming they have just about had enough of it. Therefore unless you have got proper experienced people to do the work - Petty Officers that you can trust - you cannot guarantee that the proper amount



of care is going to be taken for the work."

The outcome of the Court of Inquiry was as follows:

In compliance with your Memorandum No. W.24.G. of the 27th May, 1915, we have the honour to report that, having held a careful enquiry into the circumstances attending the blowing up of H.M.S. "PRINCESS IRENE", the Court is of the opinion that the explosion was an accidental one.

The evidence shows that at the time of the accident mines were being primed on board. The form of pistol used has been shown and explained to the Court and it appears that a premature explosion might be caused by faulty construction of a pistol if the striker projected into the primer holder so that it could penetrate the detonator when the primer was being screwed on.

A faulty pistol in which the striker projected more than one sixteenth of an inch as supplied to H.M.S. "ANGORA" was produced to the Court.

A second possible cause of explosion might be if when fitting a pistol the tumbler levers did not properly engage under the dropper ring; it has been shown that they will hold with only one under or with all three bearing against but not under the dropper ring. In such a case, if the pistol were being fitted into the mine, any jar might release the striker and explode the detonator.

A third possible cause of explosion would be if the India rubber washer was left out of the top of the primer leaving the detonator free to be thrown against the striker, but this could only occur if the striker projected too far as in the first case.

The Officers, Petty Officers and men who gave in written statements were all questioned as to whether they had anything to add to their statements.

Under the lamentable circumstances, the Court consider it impossible to attribute blame but is of the opinion that no plea of haste should ever allow for these pistols being fitted by other than fully qualified men and further that a slight mechanical device should be fitted to the pistols to ensure that the pistol could not fire until it is properly placed with the other safety devices in the mine.

Our report is accompanied by the minutes of evidence. The inquiry has been hurried to permit Commander Petre proceeding to sea, but it is not thought that any additional evidence of value is likely to be obtained.

We have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient Servants,

Commander. H.M.S. "ANGORA" Captain. H.M.S. "CONQUEST"

Rear Admiral. H.M.S. "PEMBROKE".

Following the loss of HMS Natal on 30 December 1915 and HMS Vanguard on 9 July 1917, and previously the loss of HMS Bulwark and HMS Princess Irene, all caused by internal explosions, suspicion was raised that sabotage was to blame for the loss of all four ships. A worker at Chatham Dockyard was named as a suspect but an investigation by Special Branch cleared him of any blame.



A memorial to those lost on Bulwark and Princess Irene was erected at the Dockyard Church, Sheerness, in 1921. It was unveiled by Hugh Evan-Thomas, Commander-in-Chief, The Nore (this post was an operational command of the Royal Navy, the Nore being a sandbank at the mouth of the River Medway) and dedicated by Archdeacon Ingles, the Chaplain of the Fleet. Victims of both ships are also commemorated at a memorial in Woodlands Road Cemetery, Gillingham, as part of the Naval Burial Ground.

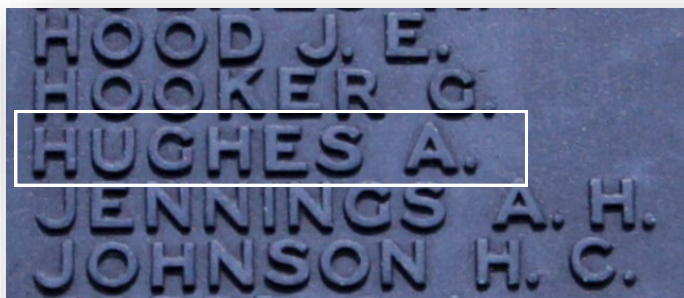


Memorial at Woodlands Cemetery that reads: To the honoured memory of seventy sailors of HMS Bulwark, ten of HMS Princess Irene and Bertie Clary, a skilled labourer of HM Dockyard, all of whom lost their lives through the internal explosion of the two ships off Sheerness and lie buried here.

Arthur is also remembered in the Chatham Naval Memorial book and in the Faversham Armistice Memorial Service Programme. He was posthumously awarded the 1914-15 Star and the British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1]



He is commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 11.



Two years after his death his wife placed the following in the 26 May 1917 issue of the East Kent Gazette:

HUGHES – IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of my dearly beloved husband, Arthur Harold Hughes, killed on H.M.S. "Princess Irene," May 27th, 1915 aged 30 years.

No useless coffin covered his breast,
Nor in a grave have we laid him;
He lays with his shipmates taking his rest,
With the boundless waters around him.
We think of him in silence,
No eyes may see us weep;
But treasured in our broken hearts,
His loving memory keep.
Day by day we miss him more,
Words would fail our loss to tell;
But in heaven we hope to meet him,
Evermore with him to dwell.

From his sorrowing Wife, Child, and Mother.

Sadly, the wreck of the Princess Irene was not declared a war grave. In fact the wreck was "lost" until 1962 when a tug fouled on it. Some 25 tons of wreckage above the sea bed were removed between 1962-64. The lower hull still remains in position.

Arthur's wife, Kate, never remarried and died on 8 October 1953.

In December 1987, Arthur's daughter, Winifred (Head), who was then living in Faversham, wrote to David Bage, the then editor of the Kingsdown and Lynsted Parish Newsletter. She asked whether her childhood home - which she referred to as "the old house" - had survived the October "hurricane". By the description of the property, and the fact that Winifred remembered that a Mrs Chapman took up residence when she and her mother moved out, David Bage was able to confirm that the house to which she referred was one of the "Oak Cottages". It had indeed survived the storm. It was obvious that, despite losing her father, she recalled happy times in Oak Cottages. So much so that she wrote this poem published in the Parish newsletter:

The Old House

The old house stands there just the same,
The beams, the porch, the window frame.
In far off days they said "it's old"
Yet still it stand there just as bold.
I see the shadows of the past,



It's sad to think they could not last.
My mother with her pleasant face,
Always busy around the place.
The pigeons on the sloping tiles,
Since then I've travelled many miles.
I'd like to go back to those days
When people had such gentle ways,
Blowing bubbles in the air,
The old cat sleeping on the chair.
I'm sure these shadows still remain,
I visualise them all again.
The old house looks so lonely there,
Does it have a thought or prayer?
It's lovely now to pass that way,
Restores the happiness for just one day.



Faversham and North East Kent News 12 June 1915:

GREENSTREET. A section of the Sittingbourne and District Volunteer Training Corps has been formed at Greenstreet, and already has 50 members, among whom are the Vicar of Teynham, Rev. W.A. Purton, and his curate, Rev. A.B. Cole, Mr. W.R. Stonhame, of Scuttington Manor, has undertaken the temporary charge of the section, and Mr. R. Seager, of the Dover Castle, is acting as Hon. Sec. The Section meets for drill on Mondays at 8.30 p.m., Wednesday at 7.30 pm and Sundays at 9 am.





Private, S/10303 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
Previously Private, 1393 4th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) and
3rd Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

Killed in action 19 June 1915 Aged 19¹

Frederick is the youngest of our casualties, being born in Petham in January 1897 to Henry and Anna (née Marsh). The family later moved to Perry Cottages in Chartham and eventually to 1 Devon Villas, Greenstreet. One of nine children, Frederick had 4 elder sisters; Margaret, who died in 1899 aged 17 years, Sarah, Lucy and Edith. There were also two elder brothers, William and Charles, and one younger sister, Laura.

On leaving school, aged 14, Frederick took up employment with Messrs Mercer and Co as a brick-field labourer.

On Friday 15 March 1912, Frederick signed up for a period of 4 years with the Territorial Forces in Sittingbourne. After successfully passing his army medical examination, Frederick became Private 1393, 4th (Territorial Force) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). There are several anomalies in Frederick's service record regarding his claimed age. At his enlistment he claimed to be 17 years and 3 months old, possibly because he knew the lower age limit for serving in the Territorial Forces was 17 years. Frederick's birth and census records show that he was at this time just 15 years and 2 months.

Although Frederick's army records state his conduct as "good", it appears he may have taken a little time to adjust to life in the forces. It is recorded that within 16 days of joining up he had already been confined to barracks for three days following "misconduct in the mess room". Just 4 months later he was confined to barracks for a further seven days for "irregularity on sentry duty at 11.10pm".

After serving 271 days, Frederick was transferred from the Territorial Force on 10 December 1912 on the formation of the 3rd Battalion, The Buffs (Special Reserves). The following day he attended the Canterbury recruiting office to sign up for this new Battalion for a period of 6 years. Since claiming only six months earlier that he was 17 years and 2 months, he was now claiming to be 18 years 11 months (actual age being 15 years 11 months). He also appears to have grown 1½ inches in this time. These details appear to be confirmed in the employer's reference given by Mr J W Rowe, Foreman, at Messrs Mercer and Co Brickmakers. With no questions asked, Frederick now became Private, S/10193.

Just four days after the declaration of war, on 8 August 1914, Frederick was mobilised and assigned to 3rd Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). On 13 August 1914, the battalion moved to Cambridge and was billeted in the grounds of Christ's College. Frederick was posted to France on 27 December 1914 to join others in his Battalion in the Armentières Sector as part of the British Expeditionary Force.

At some time in March 1915, Frederick was transferred into the 1st Battalion, The Buffs. At this

¹ Military records list Frederick's age at death as 19. However, birth and census records lead us to believe that he would have been 18 years and 5 months - making him seven months short of the minimum age for serving overseas.



time his new Battalion alternated between the front-line around Rue de Bois and billets at Armentieres and then Vlamertinghe. While in the trenches they were occupied with digging saps between lines of trenches. This was an essential feature in 'mature' trenches that allowed movement without breaking cover between lines of trenches. All the time they came under fire from machine guns and snipers.

On 14 March 1915, the Battalion moved by train to Vlamertinghe (approx. 15 miles) in support of the 27th Division, only to withdraw back to Armentières the next day. On 17 March, the Battalion was readying itself for inspection in the Grand Place by General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, commanding the 2nd Army. The inspection was followed by a note:

"The Army Commander Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien was greatly pleased with the appearance and turn out of the Battalion yesterday. The Corps Commander expressed to the Commanding Officer his satisfaction on the condition of the rifles and boots and stated that these were the best he had ever seen."

During March, the Battalion was frequently reinforced in the trenches and found themselves under heavy shelling together with machine gun "duels." Exchanges of fire and shelling continued until the Regiment returned to billets in Armentieres on 27 March.

The Battalion returned to the trenches on 6 April to relieve the Cameronians. Other than a bit of enfilade and sniping, this was a period of relative calm during which the 1st Battalion received two platoons of the 4th Battalion of the Gloucester Regiment Territorial Force, for 48 hours of instruction. The Buffs were relieved in turn by the Leicesters. Throughout this period, new drafts were added to strengthen the battalion. There were no losses experienced during the month.

The month of May was more menacing. Two soldiers were killed by snipers on 1 May. On 3 May, the Battalion Diary reports: *"Owing to the Germans using Asphyxiating Gasses, all men were issued with flannel respirators and goggles, soaked in a solution of bi-carbonate of soda, to withstand the fumes. No attempt was made on our portion of the line, but great losses were experienced N.E. of Ypres."*

While significant attacks (1,500 shells) occurred elsewhere in the line, 1st Battalion, The Buffs, were spared. The Leicesters were rotated with the Buffs in the trenches during the month, with some small numbers of wounded and killed.

On 12 May, Frederick was removed from the field by the 16th Field Ambulance and the following day moved to a rest station. It is unclear what ailed Frederick but the hospitalisation of some men without injuries suggests that disease was still taking its toll in the trenches.

On 13 May, Frederick was admitted to the Rawal Pindi Hospital in Boulogne. On 19 May, he was admitted to the 8th General Hospital (also known as the Sick Sisters Hospital) in Bois-Guillaume, a suburb north east of Rouen. On 22 May, he was moved to a convalescent camp also near Rouen.



We can perhaps be forgiven for thinking how lucky Frederick was to be in the comfort of a convalescent camp. However, the following report in "The Press", published every Saturday in Canterbury, New Zealand, gives us a glimpse into the experience:

CONVALESCENT CAMPS

BRITISH V. FRENCH

(SPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR THE
PRESS) ROUEN 1915

Convalescent patients in France have by no means the pleasant time the sick and wounded lucky enough to reach England enjoy before rejoining their units. In England, after one has finished a sojourn in hospital, he is sent to a convalescent camp, usually situated in quite the most favourable part of the country, and life there is usually one long holiday. I was fortunate enough to be quartered at Woodcote Park, Epsom, which is within handy distance of London, and as a convalescent home is hard to excel. There the patient was allowed lots of freedom, and to their credit the privilege was never, or very seldom, abused, and even if a fellow happened to overstay his leave, he rarely got into serious trouble over it. Of course, some amusing tales are told, especially with colonials who made Woodcote Park a sort of weekend habitation, while the remainder of their time was spent in London. If a fellow happened to be missing from his bedside at the medical officer's inspection some morning it was an understood thing that the man who occupied the next bed would explain that the said patient was "at the dentist" or "gone to massage" and nothing further was heard of the matter.

But on certain occasions we were given an inkling that the M.O. was certainly "one of the boys" and not quite so green as he was painted. A certain N.C.O. in a Canterbury Regiment was absent for a week or so, and of course each morning had "gone to massage" was the explanation given. However, on the

following Monday, the N.C.O. was at his bedside, and the M.O. wished to know if he was feeling any better as a result of his "massage" treatment. Of course he was feeling exceptionally fit. The M.O. continued to ask him questions, and our gallant N.C.O. did his best with rather a difficult subject. Then it came to a discussion as to whether the Midland Line to Manchester was quite the most comfortable to travel by, but if the officer knew of the whereabouts of the N.C.O. when he was presumably "at massage" is a question that has not been decided by the Canterbury boy. They were gay old times for the soldier. After the medical inspection at 9a.m. the men were free for the rest of the day until 9p.m.

In France, matters are somewhat different, and rules and regulations in the convalescent camps here must be rigidly adhered to. Even, the aspect of the place on first acquaintance is not inviting. Barb-wire fences are not ideal surroundings for sick and wounded men. Except for mess rooms, there are singularly few huts here, and the prospects of spending the winter nights in the roomy, well-ventilated tents is not too pleasant. But the tents are quite cosy, and the camp-beds cover up quite a number of short-comings. Leave is not liberally granted, and only 5 per cent of the men are given leave each day to visit the town of Rouen. Of course, entertainments are arranged for the men and barely a day passes but they are given the opportunity of attending some function or other. Monday is usually a slack day, and only camp fatigues are required. On Tuesday afternoons the men are taken to a picture show in Rouen, and at night a whist-drive helps to while away an hour or two. On



Wednesday evenings the camp theatricals do their level best to provide fun, and Thursday afternoon is spend at a vaudeville show in the town, while Friday and Saturday picture shows are the rule once again. Besides this both the Soccer or Rugby footballers play and, of course, many "barrackers" are needed. Both the camp football teams are fairly strong, and the Soccer players, amongst whom are Spiers, the Scottish international, and several other famous players, are the best in Rouen, if not in

France. The Rugby Team, which includes three New Zealanders, is so far undefeated, and claims victories of Australian and South African teams. A game against a New Zealand team is being looked forward to with confidence.

All said and done, Convalescent Camp life in France, is not nearly as bad as it might be, and no matter how unpleasant things may be, there is the fact that a few miles away there is a place called "up the line" which is a lot worse.

On 23 May, Frederick reported back to his Battalion at Armentières.

Between 31 May and 1 June, the Battalion was billeted in Bailleul, during which time Prime Minister Herbert Asquith inspected the 16th Infantry Brigade and Brigadier-General Lynden Bell paid the Battalion a visit.

The Battalion marched to billets in some huts N.E. of Flameranghe, where it was held in reserve under the command of Major E.H. Finch-Hatton. Again, over this period, there was a flow of drafts from the reserve at home.

Injuries were recorded when the Battalion was in reserve and fragmenting shells were targeted on the reserve huts, reinforcing the point that the "reserve" was very much still within firing range. On 7 June, the shelling intensified with 3 hours of continuous shelling, resulting in the loss of one officer and 10 other ranks. Consequently, on 8 June, the Battalion marched four miles further back and bivouacked in a wood.

Ten days later on 18 June, the battalion took over the trenches from 1st West York Regiment in the Potijze sector of the Ypres salient. During that day, one man was lost and 2 wounded.

On Saturday 19 June, the Battalion's war diary reads:

*"Enemy bombarded us during the night with gas shells and also pumped gas over from their lines - our men put on their smoke helmets, which were kept on for 4 hours. **5 killed and 19 wounded.**"*

Frederick was one of those killed in action.

The attrition of soldiers (casualties and wounded) through shelling and mortaring continued. This period is noted for the absence of rifle fire - the damage was done entirely by shelling that killed through a mixture of direct explosion, shrapnel, collapsing trenches, and collapsing dugouts.

News of Frederick's fate came to his family just a few months after the death of his father. On 30 November 1917, his mother received his personal effects, which consisted only of his identification disc and some correspondence.



Frederick's death was announced in the Daily Express on 16 July. The following day the Faversham and North East Kent News printed the following:

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

Another death has occurred in the ranks of men connected with Lynsted parish serving in the war, news having been received that Frederick Carlton, of the 1st Batt. Buffs, was killed in action in France on June 19th.

The deceased was only 19 [sic] years of age, was the youngest son of Mrs Carlton, a widow, residing at the west end of Greenstreet. When only 15 years of age he joined the Sittingbourne Territorial Battalion of the Buffs and when war broke out he was on the Reserve. He was a splendid marksman and had won many prizes in shooting competitions. Deceased had been seven months in the trenches and had not previously been hit. He was ill in hospital, however, for two or three weeks.

Charles Carlton, a brother of the deceased, is also in the Buffs, and has been at the front about a couple of months. In a letter which his mother received last Monday he stated he was alright.

Mrs Carlton's eldest son, William Henry Carlton, was invalided from the Navy after seven years' service. For thirteen months he was in hospital in Malta and afterwards for some time in Portsmouth. Since then, however, he has wonderfully recovered in health and is now in Government service at Upnor.

Mrs Carlton can therefore be proud of the part her sons have played and are playing for their country. Her present bereavement follows closely on the loss of her husband who died only in January last.

The late Mr Carlton was for thirty years in the service of the Thomson family and came to Greenstreet when Colonel Thomson took Scuttingham Manor, where he resided for a time. Colonel Thomson has also suffered bereavement by the war, his son Lieut. R. R. Thomson, of the 15th Sikhs, being killed in action in May. He was 23 years of age.

It may also be mentioned that two elder brothers of Mr. Carlton were killed in the Indian Mutiny. One of them bore the same name (Frederick) and was the same age as the young man who has now been killed in France.

Frederick was posthumously awarded the 1914-15 Star and the British War and Victory medals. [See Annex 1]



Frederick Percy CARLTON

In June 1919 Frederick's mother and elder brother Charles, who himself had served in The Buffs, received his outstanding wages and war gratuity. This amounted to £6 8s 0d (£6.40) and £1 1s 5d (£1.07) respectively. [See Annex 2] Taken together this amounts to roughly £380 in today's money.

He is buried in Potijze Chateau Wood Cemetery, Ypres, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, Grave Ref: B.3.



Photographs courtesy of Paul and Karen Fawcett







Faversham and North East Kent News, 17 July 1915:

The Lynsted list of men serving in H.M. Forces now numbers close upon a hundred men, representing about 9 per cent of the population of the parish – a very creditable record.

Sidney Ackerman, son of Mr. T.L. Ackerman, headmaster of Lynsted School, is in the Army Accountant's Department in France. He was formerly in the Civil Service in South Africa.

Faversham and North East Kent News, 7th August 1915:

THE ROLL OF HONOUR. DEATH ROLL OF LOCAL MEN.

THE TOLL OF WAR

Last Wednesday was the anniversary of the outbreak of the War. During the year Faversham and the district has lost by death as many as 50 men, that is to say men who belonged here either by birth, or the residence of their parents, or by their own residence here.

The list is possibly incomplete, but it includes all whom we have been able to trace.

Of the total number 35 belonged to the Army or Territorials, and 14 to the Navy, while one is employed in Sheerness Dockyard. Forty-two have either been killed in action, died of wounds, or lost at sea, the deaths of the remaining eight being due to either illness or accident. Several of the men were married and have left widows and families.

The list includes the names of two brothers, namely Arthur John Hickson (died of wounds) and Sidney Charles Hickson (killed in action), sons of Mr. and Mrs William Hickson, of Selling. They were both in the Buffs.

THE ARMY: NCOs & MEN

CARLTON, FREDERICK, 1st Battalion, the Buffs; son of Mrs. Carlton, of Greenstreet, Lynsted; aged 19. Killed in action. HALL, GEORGE ABRAHAM, 2nd Battalion the Buffs, son of Mrs. Hall of Greenstreet, Teynham. Killed in action. HIGGINS, CHARLES EDWARD, Royal Engineers; son of Mr. and Mrs. James Higgins, of 9, Sandown Cottages, Teynham; aged 21 years. Died in hospital. PILE, WILLIAM J., 2nd Battalion, the Buffs; son of Mrs. Pile, of Teynham. Killed in action. TOLHURST, C., 1st Battalion the Buffs; a reservist who had been residing at Lynsted. Killed in action.

THE NAVY: CHAMP, STEPHEN, HMS Goliath. He was 44 years of age and belonged to Barrow Green Teynham. CROUCHER, HERBERT, HMS Formidable; aged 36 years. Formerly lived at Doddington.

OTHER DEATHS: The following, who were also serving in H M Forces, have died either through illness or from accident:-

GOODWIN, THOMAS, 1/4th Battalion the Buffs; son of Mr. T.E. Goodwin, of Oare, aged 31 years. Died of enteric in India. RIDLEY, ERNEST, 2nd Battalion the Buffs, son of Mr. And Mrs George Ridley of Station Road, Teynham; aged 28 years. Died in hospital at Chatham.

BRAVERY IN THE FIELD: D.C.M. - BRADFORD, WILLIAM, 2nd Highland Light infantry. He is well known in Greenstreet and district where prior to the War he had been employed as a postman.



Malcolm Philip Dalton pictured left, with his older brother Frederick (see opposite)

**Sergeant, 1357, 1/1st Royal East Kent Yeomanry,
(The Duke of Connaught's Own (Mounted Rifles))**

Died of wounds in Gallipoli 9 November 1915 Aged 29

Malcolm was born towards the end of 1886, the youngest child of fruit farmer Philip and his wife Eliza Ann Dalton (née Rains — a cousin of the soon to be famous actor Claude Rains) of The Burrs, Cellar Hill, Lynsted. Malcolm had an elder brother, Frederick, and two elder sisters, Cecilia and Mary. On leaving school Malcolm worked on the family fruit farm.

According to the 1911 Census, Malcolm is recorded as being employed on his father's fruit farm. Unfortunately his military service records have not survived, but going by his regimental number he probably enlisted in the Royal East Kent Yeomanry, 1st South Eastern Mounted Brigade, 1st Mounted Division in Faversham shortly after the census around May 1911.



His regiment was mobilised on 4 August 1914

at the outbreak of war, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel The Earl of Guildford. At this time, the regiment was equipped only with saddles, rifles and two machine guns. By the end of August some horses arrived but they did not become fully equipped with transport and weapons until October.

The 513 strong Brigade was stationed at Sturry Court, Broad Oak, near Canterbury, the home of Viscount Milner, who was to become Secretary of State for War in 1918. Milner agreed to turn the house and grounds over to the 1/1st Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles for military purposes. At the beginning of 1915 the regiment moved to the Canterbury Polo Ground at Littlebourne, from where it concentrated on defending the Kent coast.

It had become clear that warfare had changed radically for career soldiers. Mounted Regiments "dismounted" and in many cases were given scant trench warfare training. Thus, Malcolm left Canterbury as a foot soldier. The following extract from his Regiment's War Diary details the voyage:

23 Sept 3.20am Canterbury	The Regiment composed of 26 Officers and 487 other ranks (Total 513) left Canterbury
23 Sept 11.45am Liverpool	Arrived Liverpool



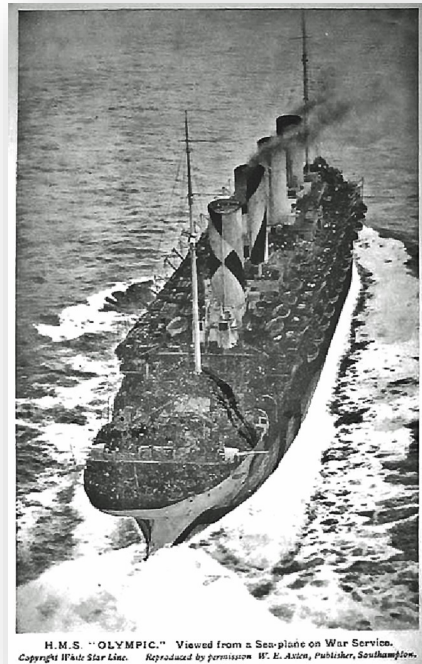
23 Sept 12.30pm Liverpool	Embarked on HMT 2819 (RMS Olympic, White Star Line)
25 Sept 9.55am	Voyage from Liverpool commenced
1 Oct 3.35pm Mediterranean	Lighted 2 boatloads of French and Spanish sailors flying signals of distress, their ship having been torpedoed by hostile submarine. Ship stood by and took sailors on board
1 Oct 4.30pm	The ship was attacked by hostile submarine in the Mediterranean about 200 miles from Mudros. A torpedo was launched at our ship, which missed the stern and upon our guns opening fire the submarine disappeared

The ship on which Malcolm sailed, the now "HMT" (Hired Military Transport) Olympic 2810, was the oldest of the three "Olympic Class" vessels built by Harland and Wolff for the White Star Line. Her two sister ships were RMS Titanic, sank after hitting an iceberg on its maiden voyage in 1912, and RMS Britannic which sank on 21 November 1916, after hitting a mine laid by the German minelayer submarine U79 in a barrier off Kea, Greece. It was serving as a hospital ship at the time. Olympic had been stripped of her luxury fittings, the portholes and lights covered, and armed with 12-pounders and 4.7-inch guns. The ship was now able to convey up to 6,000 troops.

The incident noted in the War diary on 1 October was to cause problems for the Olympic's Captain, Bertram Fox Hayes. Records show that on 1 October lifeboats from the French ship Provincia were sighted. The Provincia had been sunk by a U-boat that morning off Cape Matapan. On seeing survivors in the water Captain Hayes stopped the ship and was able to rescue 34 people. The British Admiralty accused the Captain of putting the ship in danger. It was considered that the Olympic's best defence was its speed and stopping it in waters where enemy U-boats were active rendered her an unmissable target. However, the French Vice-Admiral Louis Dartige du Fournet awarded Hayes the Gold Medal of Honour.

The War Diary continues:

2 Oct 11.30am Isle of Lemnos	Arrived Mudros Bay (Isle of Lemnos)
4 Oct Isle of Lemnos	All troops on board the "Olympic" were inspected by the Governor of the Island who commented on the fitness and physique of the Regiment
7 Oct Isle of Lemnos	Disembarked into HMT 227 (Abassiah)
7 Oct 9.20pm Gallipoli Peninsula	Arrived Bay of Hellos





7 Oct 11.30pm	Disembarked on W Beach. Marched via coast to Gully Beach thence to Gully Ravine
8 Oct 2.20am	Arrived Gully Ravine. 1st and 2nd Squadrons occupied Eski Lines and 3rd Squadron, Machine Gun Section and Headquarters dug themselves in in Gully Ravine. Regimental headquarters were established in Gully Ravine at the sharp bend just below the Boomerang (Gap)

On his arrival, Malcolm's regiment was attached to the East Lancashire Division. They had been hit hard in the middle of August 1915 and were down to little more than one third of their normal establishment through battle casualties and sickness.

The month preceding Malcolm's death played out as follows:

9 Oct	50% of the officers and NCOs in trenches at Fusilier Bluff for general instruction.	
11 Oct	Remaining officers and NCOs in trenches at Fusilier Bluff for general instruction. One NCO killed.	1642 L/Cpl J C Hammond
12 Oct	One private killed.	1773 Pte E Everett
13 Oct	6 Officers and 2 troops - per squadron - occupied trenches at Fusilier Bluff. Machine Gun Section also occupied trenches.	
14 Oct	8 Officers and 40 NCOs men (Base details) arrived at Gully Ravine from Mudros (Isle of Lemnos). Time recording.	Appendix 1 *
15 Oct	4 Officers and 4 troops occupied support trenches behind Fusilier Bluff from this date to the 21st instant. 1 officer and 14 NCOs and men of the Machine Gun Section with 2 machine guns attached to 125th Brigade for duty in the trenches from this day to 18th instant.	
16 Oct	Alarm gong	Appendix 2 **
18 Oct	1 Officer and 1 troop attached to the 7th Lancashire Fusiliers who occupied trenches on the right of the Ravine from this date to the 21st instant.	
19 Oct	One private wounded	2792 Pte Bourne
21 Oct	1st and 2nd Squadrons, 2 troops of 3rd Squadron occupied trenches on the left of Gully were attached to 7th Batt Lancashire Fusiliers. Lt Col The Earl of Guilford admitted to hospital with dysentery. The Machine Gun Section to relieve 2 guns of the 125th Brigade from this date to the 24th instant.	
23 Oct	Capt R M Sebag Montefiore, Capt H H Dawes, Lt S R T A M Williams and 2nd Lt F N Tuff wounded through explosion of Cricket Ball Bomb, Lt H R Farnell Watson appointed Brigade Bombing Officer.	



25 Oct	Lt S R T A M Williams died of wounds.	
29 Oct	1st Squadron occupied trenches on the right of the Ravine for 2 days.	
30 Oct	Capt C T Fox admitted to hospital.	
31 Oct	One private died of dysentery at Alexandria	1871 Pte H Eddon
1 Nov	The Regiment occupied the trenches right of the Ravine for 3 days. One private wounded.	1843 Pte Wenborne
5 Nov	2nd Lt F N Tuff died of wounds at Malta.	
7 Nov	The Regiment occupied the trenches from Inniskillin Inch to Fusilier Bluff for 5 days.	

*** Appendix 1**

Time Recording GRO 265

In order to assimilate the methods of recording time in the Royal Navy, the French and the British Forces respectively and to secure uniformity in referring to hours of issue and dispatch of orders, instruction and messages, the method of recording time in vogue in the Royal Navy will be adopted throughout the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. All time to be indicated will be written in a group of four figures. The times between 12 midnight and noon will be written as heretofore but without the addition of "AM" and the "0" must appear at the commencement of any group indicating a time earlier than 10am. Figure "0" must also be inserted immediately in front of the last figure when less than 10 minutes are indicated. Thus

8-15 am will be written 0815

9-7 am will be written 0907

**** Appendix 2**

Alarm Gong Regimental Order

An empty shell case will be hung within easy reach of the Sentry at Regimental Headquarters which will be sounded in the event of a Poison Gas Attack. On hearing the gong struck all ranks will don their Gas Helmets.

Sadly, Malcolm survived just 34 days after landing at Gallipoli. His fate is recorded in the War Diary:

8 Nov	Two NCOs and 1 private wounded	1357 Sergt Dalton 1295 Sergt J M McLeod 2160 Pte Thomas
9 Nov	One NCO died of wounds	1357 Sergt Dalton

Malcolm had been wounded by shrapnel from one of our own shells. He died of his wounds 17 hours later.



The family back home received the sad news of Malcom's death just three weeks after the death of his brother-in-law, 37 year old Richard Henry Wright, the husband of his sister Mary.

The news of Malcolm's death was reported in the Faversham and North East Kent News on 4 December 1915:

LYNSTED YEOMAN KILLED.

TROOPER MALCOLM DALTON

The death is reported from Gallipoli of Trooper Malcolm Dalton, East Kent Yeomanry, who, it appears, was killed on November 10th [sic] by shrapnel.

Trooper Dalton, who was 28 years of age, was the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. P Dalton, of The Burrs, Cellar Hill, Lynsted. Prior to joining the Yeomanry for the War the deceased assisted his father in the fruit business.

The utmost sympathy is felt for Mr. and Mrs. Dalton in their loss, by their many friends in Lynsted and Teynham. This is the second bereavement they have just lately sustained, the death of their son-in-law, Mr. R. H. Wright, occurring barely three weeks ago.

Also on 4 December, the East Kent Gazette carried two pieces. Firstly, from his parents:

DEATHS: DALTON. November 9th on Gallipoli Peninsula, Malcolm Philip, the younger son of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Dalton, Cellar Hill, Lynsted, aged 29 years. In loving memory of our dear boy.

And, more fully:

DEATH OF A LYNSTED YEOMAN. SERGT DALTON KILLED AT GALLIPOLI. A STRIKING TRIBUTE FROM HIS COMMANDING OFFICER.

A sad blow has befallen Mr. and Mrs. Philip Dalton and family, of The Burrs, Cellar Hill, Lynsted, in the death of their younger son, Sergeant Malcolm Philip Dalton, R.E.K.M.R., the news of which has been received this week. The family had just sustained a bereavement in the death of Mr. Richard Wright, a son-in-law, but on Monday morning came the sad news that their son Malcom had lost his life in Gallipoli – the result of an accident, it is true; but, nevertheless, the young man laid down his life for his country as truly as though he had fallen in action.

The news of his death was continued in the following letter which Mr. Dalton received from Major Leach-Lewis on Monday morning:-

"Gallipoli, 11/11/15.

My dear Sir,- It is impossible for me to express my feelings with regard to the death of your son, of which no doubt you have already received the official intimation. The



affair has cast a gloom over the whole regiment, particularly the 3rd Squadron. May I offer my most sincere sympathy. In doing so I am only expressing the feelings of everyone here.

Though the circumstances are distressing, I am sure you would like to know how the lad died. At the time he was Acting Quarter-Master-Sergeant, and on Monday afternoon last (8th) he had gone up to the trenches, where the regiment were in. He was in the best possible spirits, and was amusing some of his comrades, when one of them, Sergeant Southall, remembered that he had to go away on duty. Your son then sat down in his dug-out, saying 'alright, I'll keep your place warm till you come back.'

A few moments after, one of our own shells burst short, and a piece of it struck the poor fellow in the head. At the same time Sergeant McLeod was hit in the shoulder, and Private Thomas in the thigh. I don't think he suffered, his wound being too severe, though he was sufficiently conscious once to ask for water.

It was at 4pm that he was hit, and he died the following morning, at 8 o'clock (9th), in the Gully Beach Hospital.

We buried him at 3.15 the same afternoon in the Gully Beach Cemetery, the service being taken by the regimental Chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Robertson.

The spot where he lies is on a high point, overlooking the Asiatic. We are getting a wooden cross made by the Royal Engineers to mark the grave. That such a good fellow should be killed by our own shell is terrible; but you have the satisfaction of knowing that he died doing his duty as much as any of the poor fellows who have given their lives for their country out here.

Not only was he an excellent N.C.O., but by his cheerfulness in all circumstances he set an example to all. He proved himself a really good fellow and a gallant comrade. Personally I miss him greatly.- With my deepest sympathy, believe me, yours sincerely, A. LEACH LEWIS, Major."¹

Sergeant Malcolm Philip Dalton, who was 29 years of age, belonged to the Sittingbourne and Sheppey Troop, Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles, for four years. He assisted his father in his business as a farmer and fruit grower, and was in every respect a fine young fellow. He was a young man of powerful physique, and was a good shot. Sergeant Dalton (he was then a trooper) was a member of the Troop team that won so many shooting trophies a few years ago. The champion shooting team, with the trophies they had won, and Captain Sir Robert Filmer, Bart., in the centre, were photographed, and Sir Robert Filmer presented a framed copy to each member of the team.

The East Kent Yeomanry left Liverpool for the Dardanelles on September 26th.

Mr. Dalton has not yet had any official intimation of his son's death. But the letter from Major Leach Lewis puts the sad affair beyond all doubt.

Malcolm Dalton was of a cheery, sunny disposition. His laugh was infectious; he was invariably smiling. He was a great favourite with Greenstreet people – in fact, he was a favourite with everybody.

¹ Prior to the war, Allan Leach Lewis had played cricket for Kent and in 1904 played centre-half for Tottenham Hotspur FC. He survived the war.

The deceased young man used to be a member of the Greenstreet Hockey Club and the news of Malcolm Dalton's death has come as a great personal loss. Malcolm Dalton was one of the bright spirits of the club, as he was of his native village, and of his regiment, and the loss of so popular a young man is deeply deplored. Mr. and Mrs. Dalton and family have the heartfelt sympathy of everybody in their very sad bereavement.

A memorial service will be held at Lynsted Parish Church at three p.m. tomorrow (Sunday).



Although initially buried at Gully Beech Cemetery, after the Armistice, Malcolm's remains were moved to Pink Farm Cemetery, Helles, Turkey. The local name of the cemetery is Sotiri Farm but took its Anglicised name from the red soil in that area.

Malcolm is remembered at the head of his parent's gravestone in Lynsted Churchyard extension:

In loving memory of
Sergeant Malcolm Philip Dalton
1st Royal East Kent Yeomanry
Of Cellar Hill, Lynsted
Who was killed in active service
In Gallipoli by a bursting shell.
Interred in Gully Beech Cemetery
Nov. 9th 1915, aged 29
He did his duty

All British and Imperial forces in the Helles bridgehead were evacuated from Gallipoli by 8 January 1916. History tells us the horror of the Gallipoli campaign, which was ultimately unsuccessful.

Malcolm was posthumously awarded the 1914-15 Star and the British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1] In April 1916, Malcolm's mother, as sole legatee, received £2 of money owed to her late son. In September 1916 she received a further £3 8s 4d (£3.41½p). In September 1919 Malcolm's war gratuity of £7 was also received by his mother. [See Appendix 2] On the granting of probate Mrs Dalton also received





£235 15s 6d (£235.77½ p). Taken together these amount to roughly £12,000 in today's money.

Here we see Malcolm in happier times.

Malcom (back row, right) at his older sister Cecilia's wedding to Horace Edmonds in 1905 on the front lawn of The Burrs in Cellar Hill



The Lynsted with Kingsdown Society is indebted to Malcolm's great niece, Sally Coupland, for all her help with information and for kindly agreeing to the use of family photographs.

The following pages include extracts from a soldier's letter home and a War Office report, which gives us insight into the conditions that Malcolm faced in his short time in the field.

Kent Messenger, September 25th, 1915

Life with the Mediterranean Forces.

The following extracts from a letter from Private E. Jeffrey, of "B" Company, 2nd-5th Buffs (attached to the Queen's Own, 2nd-4th Royal West Kent Regiment), son of Mr. and Mrs. W.S. Jeffrey, of Meadowside, Kennington, tell graphically of life with the British Expeditionary Force.

Acknowledging a letter from home, he says:

"In your letter you mention the sending out of chocolate, etc. I only wish I had written home for some foodstuff of any sort long ago. The food we get out here is not like they have in France, where things are more settled. We have had scarcely any bread since we landed, and none at all for the first fifteen days. Coupled with this nearly all of us had stomach trouble, dysentery, etc., owing to sleeping on damp ground and getting wet to the skin with white mists (cold nights and hot days). Most of us are as weak as rats. Besides this we have dug a large part of our own trenches, and have to work day and night at them. We signallers are attached to our Company Signalling Station in the fire trench, and we have so many hours of duty on the telephone (day and night). Besides this, we have look-out duty to do. Often we have only had two hours' sleep for the night, and we rarely get more than four hours. Nevertheless, I'm in good health and contented, and have never shirked any work that has come along so far. Send any foodstuff you like, anything nourishing. Chocolate would be a God-send. A book, magazine, or paper would be very acceptable. You could never find a crust of stale bread or bad bread lying about out here.



We landed here on August 10th; sent into the trenches August 13th; sent down to base August 31st; returned to trenches September 4th. You will see by the foregoing that we had three days at the base after we landed, then eighteen days in the trenches, four more days at the base, and now we are in the firing line again. There seems to be very little going on along this part of our front, and we are only troubled with a few snipers and occasional shell fire.

Out of the Battalion, 1,000 strong, we have had about 13 killed and anything from about 50 to 100 wounded. The signallers have had a larger proportion of casualties than the rest of the Battalion if you take the percentages of each. A considerable number of signallers have been hit by snipers while laying out wire. Besides the actual casualties, a large number of men have gone sick, the climate having knocked them up.

When we are at the base we get bathing in the sea every day, but unfortunately during the last four days we were down there I was so knocked up for the first three days, that I couldn't appreciate a bathe and only went in to get one or two layers of dirt off. I think what knocked me up was the march down to the base (a heavy march over sand with equipment) on an empty stomach. I am all right again now. We were given out greatcoats water proof sheets and our change of clothing while we were at the base, so we are better off now than we were before, and can sleep warmer at night. The flies are a shocking pest out here, and we have the greatest difficulty in not eating them together with our food. They have an absolute disregard for life or death, and consequently you have to pick them off your food with your fingers, a thing you would never have to do in England. It is a great treat to have letters in the trenches and I am most grateful for them.

I'm glad I've come out here as it is giving me the education of my life, just as I always told you it would. It will teach me to appreciate my home for one thing, although I don't know how long I shall be content to settle down to a hum-drum life, as I believe it will be difficult to, after so much knocking about and rough living.

In a postscript the writer adds: "I guess I shall be like Scott, the South Pole explorer, and have chocolate and buns under my pillow at night when I come home again, in fact, I shouldn't be surprised if I didn't manage to get down two or three beef steak puddings during the hours of slumber. They would make a good substitute for four hours' trenching at midnight anyhow."



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An ambulance wagon of the 42nd (East Lancashire) Division, Gully Ravine, Helles, showing the mud after the storm of November 1915. The storm was so sudden and the sheer volume of water so great after the snow and rain that it created these unusual conditions. November 1915.





East Kent Gazette, 20 November 1915:

GREENSTREET- THINKING OF "THE BOYS"

Will the residents of Lynsted and Teynham, who have relatives in the Army or Navy, give their names and numbers to Mr. H.A.J. Peasnall, "The Pharmacy", Greenstreet, so that a Christmas greetings may be forwarded to them?



Frederick Godfrey (see opposite)

Private, G/5356, 8th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

Killed in action 21 November 1915 Aged 34

Frederick was born in Lynsted on 22 July 1881 to Alfred, an agricultural labourer, and Emily (née Butler) of Rayners Barracks (later known as Wanstalls) in Greenstreet. Frederick was the youngest of 10 children; Maria, Thomas, Albert George, John, Edward, Frank, William, Ernest and Sarah. As was the norm at that time, Frederick was given the same name as Alfred and Emily's first child, who was born in January 1865 and lived only four weeks.

Frederick, a brickfield labourer and member of the Teynham and Lynsted Fire Brigade, married Lucy Maude Ruck in Lynsted Church on 24 October 1903. Frederick had sung in the church choir. At the time of the 1911 Census Frederick was working as a labourer on a fruit farm and was living in Webb's Cottages, Ham Green, Upchurch. He had three children: Ernest Edward (then aged 7), Catherine May (6) and Percy Frank (3). Frederick and Lucy suffered the tragedy of losing twins (possibly as a result of Lucy falling from a ladder when cherry picking) Frederick and Emily in 1907. Born on 25 June, Emily died the next day and Frederick one day later.

In January 1915, Frederick enlisted in Sittingbourne and was assigned to the 8th (Service) Battalion The Buffs, East Kent Regiment. Formed at Canterbury as part of the Third New Army, on 12 September 1914, the Battalion moved to Shoreham and joined the 72nd Brigade of the 24th Division and then moved to Worthing. During April 1915 they returned to Shoreham and then moved to Blackdown, Aldershot. On 7 October 1915 Frederick sailed for France and landed at Boulogne.

Frederick's battalion moved to the Ypres Salient, Belgium. The 2nd, 7th and 8th Battalions were to serve from 1915 to 1917 in defence of Ypres. Frederick survived only three weeks at the front and was the only soldier of his battalion to die on 21 November 1915. The Lynsted Church remembrance names list, compiled by the now defunct Lynsted branch of the Royal British Legion, remarks that Frederick died as a result of a motorcycle accident. However, we have found no evidence of this.

Frederick's death was listed in the Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald on Christmas Day 1915:



Frederick and Lucy at Webb's Cottages, Upchurch, in 1908. Percy in his mother's arms, Ernest sitting, and Catherine.

EAST KENT WAR ITEMS.

From the casualty lists:- Killed: The Buffs, East Kent Regiment, 8th Battalion - Godfrey F.; Howarth H.; Thomas F.G. Wounded: The Buffs, 8th Battalion - Horne J. Died of Wounds: The Buffs, 6th Battalion, Combey D.P.

Previously reported missing, now reported prisoner: The Buffs, Ralph A.



The following extract from the 8th (Service) Battalion War Diary, Volume 3 - Intelligence Summary, sets the scene of the conditions that were faced by Frederick and his comrades:

Date	Position
20th Nov 1915	HQ DUGOUTS, 9.30pm: "The relieving units sent their representatives to take over the trenches this morning. We have received orders that we are going into Army Reserve. There was some shelling this afternoon, but ample retaliation was given by the Belgians.

There is no entry for 21st November, the day on which Frederick was killed.

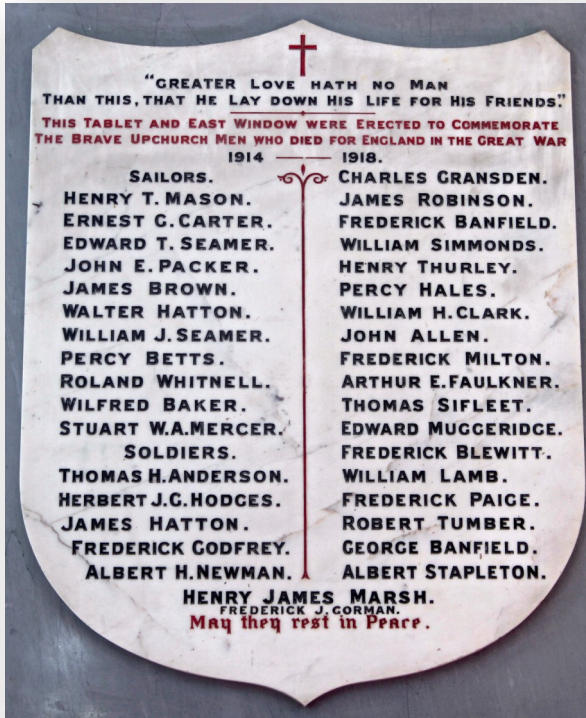
Date	Position
22nd Nov	RENINGHELST CAMP G., 10am: Yesterday morning there was very considerable rifle fire between 7.45 and 8.15am. Both ourselves and the Germans were firing rapid fire, but as we had our men up on the fire step and they were unable to see a single German it was concluded that the enemy were firing up in the air, from the bottom of their trenches. They shelled our reserve lines heavily at 11.30am and caused a good deal of damage, especially to the Trench Mortar Battery's dugouts. The relief last night was carried out in good order and without any firing from the enemy.
23rd Nov	EECKE: The battalion paraded at 4.30pm last night and marched to this village via BOESHEPE-GODEWAERSVELDE. The roads were good, but for the last three miles



Frederick is buried at Hedge Row Trench Cemetery, also known as Ravine Wood, Zillebeke, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, Special Memorial H.10. The cemetery was begun in March 1915 and used until August 1917. During the war the cemetery came under intense shell-fire causing much damage. After the Armistice the positions of the individual graves could not be identified. The headstones in the cemetery are therefore arranged around the Cross of Sacrifice and marked "known to be buried in this cemetery" along with an epitaph suggested by Rudyard Kipling, "Their glory shall not be blotted out".



Frederick's headstone (Ref: Sp. Mem. H. 10.) faces the Cross of Sacrifice.



Frederick is also remembered on the memorial located in the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, Upchurch, Kent, pictured left.

Frederick was posthumously awarded the 1914-15 Star, and the British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1]

The following year, Frederick's widow, Lucy, received back pay of £2 2s 10d (£2.15). On 12 September 1919 she received the war gratuity of £3. [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £340 in today's money.

Lucy returned to Greenstreet and lived in Co-op Cottages (these were situated where the Doctor's surgery and car park next to the Co-op supermarket now stand). Lucy never remarried and died in Bapchild on 18 December 1960 aged 79.

The Society is indebted to Frederick's nephew, Alan Godfrey, for his help in the preparation of this biography and for allowing the use of family photographs.

Cemetery photographs courtesy of Paul and Karen Fawcett.

East Kent Gazette, 22 January 1916:

WAR WEDDING AT LYNSTED. SERGEANT E.J.T. COURT D.C.M., AND MISS LILIAN SATTIN.

Saturday last was an eventful day in the life of Sergeant Edward John Thomas Court, of the 2nd Buffs, the only son of Mr. Thomas Court, of Greenstreet, Lynsted, for on that day he took unto himself a Lynsted young lady as his wife, and concurrently the gallant sergeant's name appeared in the list of recipients of the Distinguished Conduct Medal, for distinguished service at the Front – one of the ambitions of a soldier's career.

The bride was Miss Lilian Violet Sattin, the youngest daughter of Mr. John Sattin, of Hill House, Greenstreet.

The wedding ceremony took place at Lynsted Church, the Vicar, the Rev . T.J. Sewell, officiating. The marriage was by license.

The bride was given away by her father. There was no bridesmaid, but Mr. F. Gulvin, of Buckland, was "best man".

There was a reception afterwards at the residence of the Bride's parents, and a large company of relatives and friends were entertained, the festivities lasting until midnight. Among the party were Mr. George Sattin, of the East Kent Yeomanry, a brother of the bride, and Corporal Richard McCarthy, Rifle Brigade, a friend of the bridegroom.

Several handsome presents have been received by the happy couple.

Sergeant Court was married in his D.C.M. colours. He gained the distinction on the 14th of last May at Ypres. He was in charge of a platoon, in the trenches, when a big enemy shell pitched in that section, blowing in the trench, and burying the Sergeant under 4ft of debris. He was dug out, and although exposed to artillery fire, he stuck to his post for three or four hours, until he was relieved. During that time another big shell came over and buried seven men, killing two of them. For this gallant example of devotion to duty Sergeant Court was recommended, and he has been awarded the D.C.M. He has served more than seven years in the Buffs, four of which have been passed in Singapore and India. He has recently been serving on the recruiting staff at Sittingbourne.

Lilian's husband survived the war. However, her brother John, who we commemorate in this book, was killed in action at Vimy Ridge on 13 April 1917. Sadly, Lilian died on 6 December 1918, possibly due to the epidemic of Spanish flu.



Battery Moving Up to a New Position from Rest Camp: Dawn

Not a sign of life we rouse
In any square close-shuttered house
That flanks the road we amble down
Toward far trenches through the town.

The dark, snow-slushy, empty street.....
Tingle of frost in brow and feet.....
Horse-breath goes dimly up like smoke.
No sound but smacking stroke

As a sergeant flings each arm
Out and across to keep warm,
And the sudden splashing crack
Of ice-pools broken by our track.

More dark houses, yet no sign
Of life And axle's creak and whine
The splash of hooves, the strain of trace
Clatter: we cross the market place.

Deep quiet again, and on we lurch
Under the shadow of a church:
Its tower ascends, fog-wreathed and grim;
Within its aisles a light burns dim

When marvellous! from overhead,
Like abrupt speech of one deemed dead,
Speech-moved by some Superior Will,
A bell tolls thrice and then is still.

And suddenly I know that now
The priest within, with shining brow,
Lifts high the small round of the Host,
The server's tingling bell is lost

In clash of the greater overhead.
Peace like a wave descends, is spread,
While watch the peasants' reverent eyes

The bell's boom trembles, hangs, and dies.

O people who bow down to see
The Miracle of Calvary,
The bitter and the glorious,
Bow down, bow down and pray for us.

Once more our anguished way we take
Towards Golgotha, to make
For all our lovers sacrifice.
Again he troubled bell tolls thrice.

And slowly, slowly, lifted up
Dazzles the overflowing cup.

O worshipping, fond multitude,
Remember us too, and our blood.

Turn hearts to us as we go by,
Salute those about to die,
Plead for them, the deep bell toll:
Their sacrifice must soon be whole.

Entreat you for such hearts as break
With the premonitory ache
Of bodies, whose feet, hands, and side,
Must soon be torn, pierced, crucified.

Sue for them and all of us
Who the world over suffer thus,
Who have scarce time for prayer indeed,
Who only march and die and bleed.

* * * * *

The town is left, the road leads on,
Bluey glaring in the sun,
Toward where in the sunrise gate
Death, honour, and fierce battle wait.

Robert Nichols



Ernest Cecil Kemp in 1913 (see opposite)

Able Seaman, J/16643, Royal Navy, HMS Primula

Killed in action 1 March 1916 Aged 19

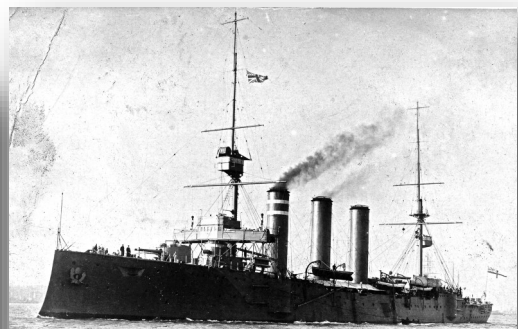
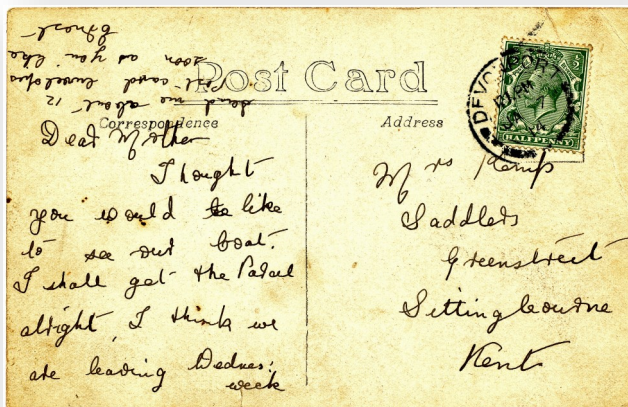
Ernest was the eldest child of William Ernest, a saddler and harness maker in Greenstreet (now No 118 London Road), Lynsted, and Mercy Annie (née Kenton). The Kemps had been master saddlers and harness-makers in Greenstreet since the 1840s and William Ernest took over the business from his father, William Jeremiah, by 1901. Ernest was born on 28 June 1896 and christened in Lynsted Church on 6 September the same year. His younger siblings were Elnith Kenton, Audrey Alice, Arthur William, Frank John and Evelyn Mercy. Sadly one child, Percy William, who was born in 1902, lived only a few months.

The Society is indebted to Ernest's nephew, David Aggersberg, who has kindly allowed us to reproduce his own research below. This far better tells the story of Ernest than we would have been able:

"It seems that life as a saddler's apprentice in the subterranean workroom beneath his father's shop did not appeal to Ernest Cecil, as he was enrolled in the Royal Navy as a boy seaman on 20 March 1912. His service record shows him as being 5ft 7in tall with a chest measurement of 34½in. His eyes were grey-brown and complexion "very fresh". His previous occupation was given as fruit-picker. The decision to join the Navy was probably influenced by his uncle, Victor Edward Kemp, who had served from 1885 to 1907 reaching the rank of Chief Stoker.

Ernest Cecil appears to have flourished in the Royal Navy, as by 1914 his chest measurement had reached 40½in! HMS Ganges, the Navy's boy seamen establishment, was located at Shotley in Suffolk. On entry he was rated as Boy 2nd Class being advanced to Boy (1st Class) in October 1912. On 16 June 1913 he was drafted to HMS Hawke, an elderly protected cruiser used for training purposes following a serious collision with RMS Olympic in the Solent during 1911.

Service on HMS Hawke ended on 12 March 1913 and Ernest Cecil then spent some time at Chatham naval base before being sent to HMS Essex, a more modern protected cruiser, on 1 January 1914. Rated as an Ordinary Seaman, the following month he was promoted to Able Seaman in September of the same year.

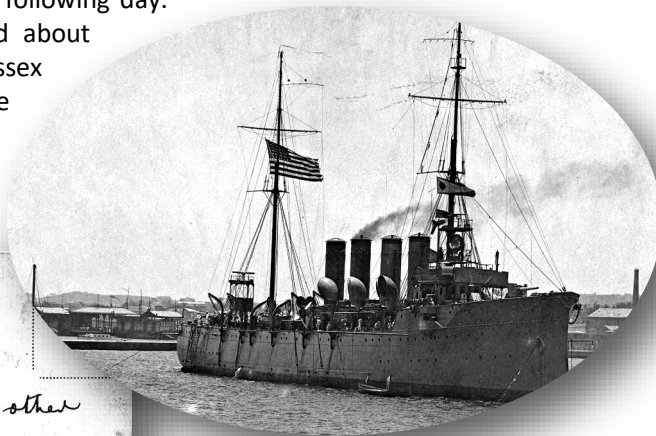


HMS Essex

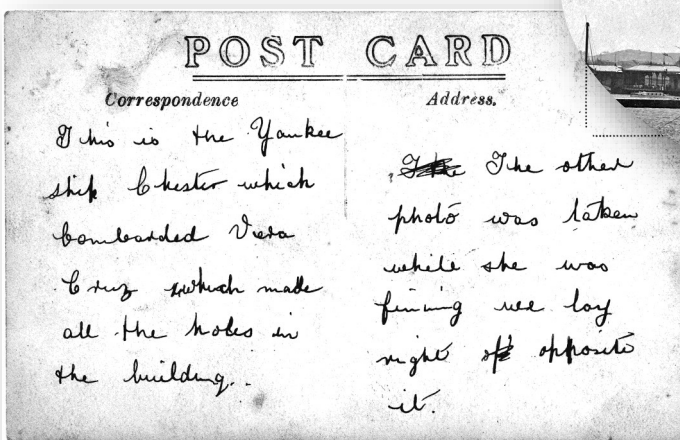


Ernest kept in touch with his mother by a series of postcards sent in addressed envelopes which she supplied. Only a few of these survive, but they cover an interesting episode in the deployment of HMS Essex to the West Indies in 1914. During this period the United States of America were having considerable difficulties with Mexico which was convulsed by revolution. An incident involving American sailors in Tampico was followed by the reported imminent arrival of an arms shipment to the port of Vera Cruz. President Wilson ordered the occupation of the port as a reprisal and a force of American sailors and marines landed on 21 April 1914. The Mexicans resisted and a naval bombardment of the waterfront occurred the following day.

The British government, no doubt concerned about British lives and interests, despatched HMS Essex to the scene, although she took no part in the action. Ernest Cecil's postcards show the bombardment and the resulting damage ashore.

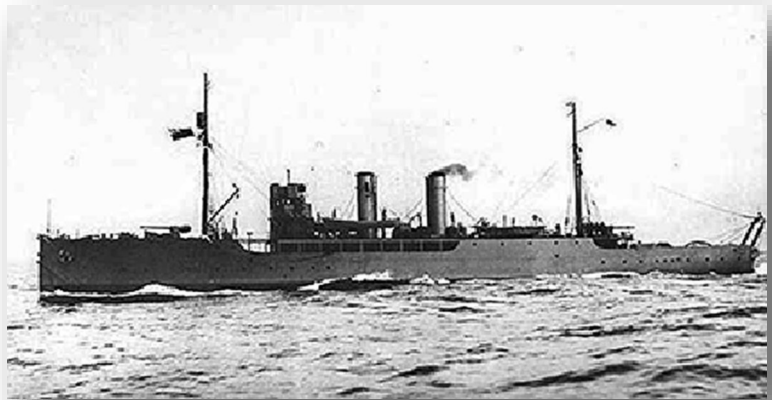


USS Chester



Service on HMS Essex was completed in April 1915 and Ernest Cecil spent another eight months at Chatham before being sent, on 4 January 1916, to HMS Egmont, the naval base at Valletta, Malta. On arrival he was assigned to the crew of HMS Primula, a minesweeping sloop of 1250 GRT, completed in January 1916 by Swan Hunter and carrying two 4 inch guns.

On 1 March 1916, while steaming south of Cape Matapan near Cerigo island, HMS Primula was torpedoed by the German submarine U-35 commanded, since 18 November 1915, by Kapitänleutnant Lothar von Arnauld de la Perière. German U-boats had been deployed to the Mediterranean during 1915 to support the Austro-Hungarian navy and were based at ports on the Adriatic.

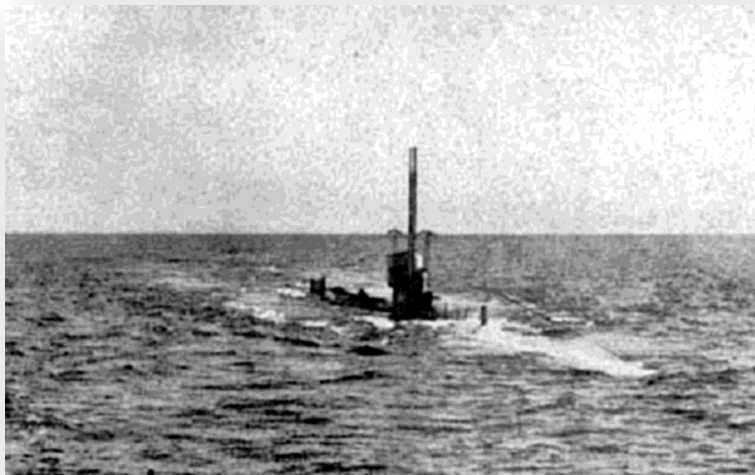


HMS Primula

The first torpedo struck the bow of the minesweeper, but the internal bulkheads held. Unable to go ahead HMS Primula turned and repeatedly attempted to ram the submarine stern first. Two more torpedoes from the U-35 missed before a third found its target and the ship sank. Ernest Cecil Kemp was one of three ratings killed. There were 107 survivors. Lothar von Arnauld de la Perière paid his own tribute to his opponent — "Four torpedoes for that tiny wasp!"

Victor Edward Kemp, his uncle, was recalled to Royal Navy active service with the rank of Chief Stoker in June 1915 and served until February 1919. He returned to live in Greenstreet.

U-35 survived the First World War, having returned to Germany in October 1918. The submarine surrendered to the Royal Navy at Harwich on 27 November 1918. Lothar von Arnauld de la Perière



U-35 in Mediterranean 1915

returned to Germany in May 1918 to command U-139. During the First World War submarines under his command sank 453,716 tons of Allied shipping and he earned a reputation for the scrupulous observation of the rules of war. Vice-Admiral Lothar von Arnauld de la Perière, Kriegsmarine commander for Western France, died in a plane crash at Le Bourget on 24 February 1941. His record as the most successful submarine commander from any navy still stands."



Ernest's death was recorded in the East Kent Gazette on 11 March 1916:

A GREENSTREET SAILOR DROWNED.

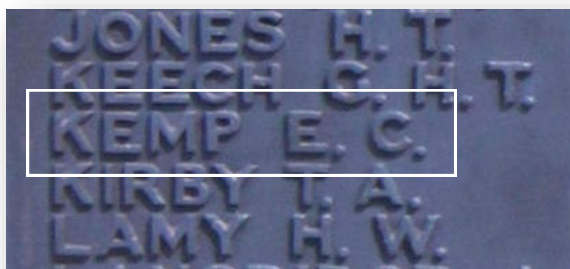
The sad news has been received of the death of Able Seaman Ernest C. Kemp, of HMS Primula, a minesweeper, that was carrying out patrol duties in the Eastern Mediterranean last week. The whole of the officers and men were saved and landed at Port Said, with the exception of three – and one of the three men reported by the Admiralty as “missing, believed to be dead” is Ernest C. Kemp. The young man who was in his 20th year, was the oldest child of Mr and Mrs Ernest Kemp, of Greenstreet. He was a finely built young fellow, and was making rapid strides in the Navy, and his death while serving his country is deeply regretted.

The deceased was very popular in the village, and much sympathy is felt for the parents and members of the bereaved family.

Two days later the Faversham and North East Kent News printed the following:

Among the crew of HMS Primula, a mine sweeper which was torpedoed recently while carrying out patrol duties in the Eastern Mediterranean, was Able Seaman Ernest C. Kemp, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Kemp, of Greenstreet, and we regret to note that he is one of the 3 men reported by the Admiralty as “missing, believed to be dead.” With the exception of only these three all the officers and men of the vessel were saved and landed at Port Said. Seaman Kemp, who was in his 20th year, was a splendid young fellow and was making good headway in the Navy.

Ernest was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1] His body was not recovered but he is remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 16.



He is also remembered on his Mother, Father and Brother's headstone in the Graveyard Extension of Lynsted Church.





William Charles Drayson (see opposite)



Corporal, G/3969, 6th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

Killed in action 18 March 1916 Aged 34

William was the third of 16 children born to Robert Henry Drayson, a market gardener, and Sarah Jane (known as Jane), née Hammond. He was born in 1882 in Eastry, Kent, and christened in the Church of St Mary the Virgin in Woodnesborough on 17 December that year. Elder siblings were Edith Ellen and Robert Hammond. His younger siblings were Gertrude Mary, Herbert John, Richard Bushell, Rosa, Lucy Jane, twins George and Harry, Frederick Thomas, Alice, Maud, Dorothy, Cecil George and Lillian Grace. Gertrude, George and Cecil died in infancy and predeceased William.

On 2 June 1906, William married Lily May Weaver at All Saints Church, Stourmouth, Kent. The couple settled in Woodnesborough, during which time William was working as a fireman in the colliery. In 1907, their first daughter, Christina May, was born, followed in 1909 by a second, Ivy Kathleen. Sadly, after just 6 years of marriage, Lily died of tuberculosis in September 1912 aged just 27. Lily is buried in the churchyard of St Mary the Blessed Virgin, Woodnesborough.

Christina and Ivy were just 3 and 6 when they lost their mother. Two years later they also became separated from their father on the declaration of war.

William enlisted in the 6th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs at Margate. The Battalion was formed at Canterbury in August 1914 as part of the First New Army (K1) and moved swiftly to Colchester. The first arrivals there found nothing but empty barracks that had been vacated in haste. The Battalion was soon up to strength but men kept arriving and the camp soon became over-crowded. An extract from "The Historical Records of The Buffs" describes life at the camp:

"Anyone who served with one of Kitchener's battalions during the latter part of 1914 and the beginning of the following year will remember what it was like. Genuine hard work and honest efforts on the part of all to make bricks with so very little straw. It is easier to collect heroes for the defence of their country than to arm, clothe, and equip them; and the number of men got very far in advance of the amount of necessities for them. A new battalion at this period was not a pretty sight. A very ugly shoddy suit of blue was doled out to the soldier, with a civilian greatcoat and generally a dummy rifle, and with this turn-out he did real strenuous drill and training. Old service rifles, for drill purposes only, began to come in later on, and the men gradually obtained sufficient blankets and clothing. Nothing daunted the spirit of the troops, however, and life was cheery enough."

On 6 November, the Battalion returned to Kent, being based at Sandling Camp, near Shorncliffe. The camp quickly became a quagmire owing to heavy rain and bad drainage. The huts even became uninhabitable with some soldiers erecting their tents inside to keep off the rain. With Christmas approaching, the soldiers moved out and into billets in the villages of Elham and Lyminge, where they were given a generous welcome by the community. The Battalion remained in these billets during January and, on the 31 January, they attended a special service in Canterbury Cathedral that had been arranged by the Dean.

The Battalion then moved to Aldershot for more advanced training that lasted until 1 June when, now part of the 37th Brigade of the 12th Division, they were mobilised and left for France. After one night in Boulogne, they were entrained for St Omer and then marched to Remilly-Werquin.



Here they rested for 3 days before, during very hot weather, marching to billets and bivouacs at Meteren, near Bailleul.

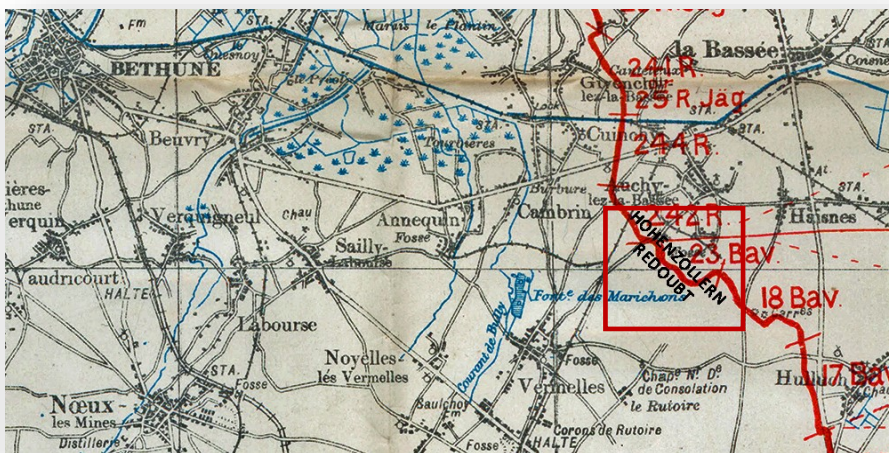
On 12 June, William's Battalion moved up to Armentieres to undergo trench warfare training before moving forward to the real thing. The remainder of his summer was spent alternating between the trenches and resting in leaking, uncomfortable and crowded billets.

The Battalion took part in the Battle of Loos (25 September to 8 October 1915) and, along with other battalions, suffered heavy losses. By the end of October the Battalion was low in numbers and was employed in work such as fetching and carrying for the Royal Engineers. In November, they saw fighting around Hohenzollern Redoubt. Then, in a very wet and cold December, they saw fighting in trenches at Givenchy and Festubert. A weary Battalion then faced the long monotony of the winter.

It is clear that William's war was hard fought. In his final months he experienced what was the coldest winter of the war. Trenches were waist deep in mud and men lived, and in some cases drowned, in these appalling conditions. His last 3 months were spent almost entirely in the trenches, starting in 1916 under bombardment.

At the beginning of March, William's battalion took up their positions in the trenches near the Hohenzollern Redoubt. This was a defensive strongpoint of the German 6th Army. This area had, over the winter months, been tunnelled by the British 170th Tunnelling Company. The enemy's

view of the British Positions was unobstructed and the intense shelling over the past few weeks had turned no man's land into a crater field. On 2 March, four mines (the largest yet used by the British) were detonated, followed by a British advance towards the German lines under orders to occupy any crater within 60 yards of our line.



Map of the Hohenzollern Redoubt area, August 1916

The only Victoria Cross awarded to William's battalion was to Corporal William Cotter for his action on 6 March 1916.

Military records report that on the day William died, there was much confusion. Between 5am and 7am, 2,000 shells had rained down. Gas shells and damage from short range mortars (minenwerfers) caused significant damage to our front-line defences and all communications with other troops at Annequin and Noyelles were cut. This caused officers on the ground to make decisions as best they could.

Confusion in the field was made worse by noise and poison gas. The following extract from The History of the 12th (Eastern) Division in the Great War 1914-1918 by P Middleton Brumwell MC, CF,



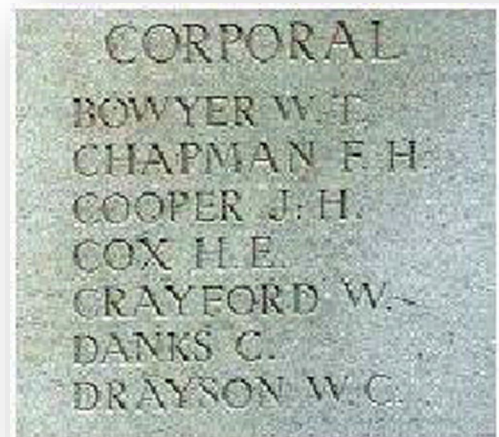
explains the scene on 18 March 1916:

On the right of the line, held by the 6th Buffs, the garrisons of Nos. 1 and 2 and "A" craters were all killed or buried, and confusion rendered worse by the fact that West Face and the top end of Saville Row, Saps [Editor's note: In trench warfare, the practice of digging small 'sap' trenches at roughly ninety degrees to existing lines and then digging a new trench line at the front of the saps. A slow, but relatively safe, way of moving forward] 9 and 9a, had been filled in by the debris from the explosions. The Germans seized the craters, and our counter-attack was delayed until these saps were cleared. Eventually three companies of the 6th Royal West Kent delivered a counter-attack and regained the near lips of these craters. The 7th East Surrey were holding the left of the line, and here "C" crater was blown up, and the Germans rushed "B" and No.4, and for some time held Sap 12 and Russian Sap, penetrating to Sticky Trench. Company-Serget-Major Palmer and three others appear to have been all that were left of the garrison of "C" crater after the explosion. They continued bombing and firing until driven back to "B," and thence to No.4, and finally out of that. A very gallant counter-attack by a party of the 7th East Surrey, led by Captain Scott, bombed the enemy out of No.4, and established posts overlooking "B," somewhat restoring the position in this sector. Meanwhile blocks had been established in Sap 12 and Russian Sap, and by 9.25pm these positions had been consolidated. No.3 crater had been held throughout the attack. At 3.15am on the 19th inst, some of the 6th Queen's, under Captain Cannon, regained the near lips of "B" and "C" craters, but had to withdraw from the latter at daylight."

William is recorded as being killed in action "on or after" 18 March 1916. It is assumed that he was lost during heavy shell-fire and was initially posted as missing. However, on 14 August 1916 an official statement was issued by the German Government reporting that he was killed or died of wounds. He was one of 33 members of his battalion killed on 18 March 1916. Only two have known graves. The previous month, on 15 July, the Faversham and North East Kent News reported: "Private W.C. Drayson, a son-in-law of Mr and Mrs Weaver, of Lynsted, has been killed in battle."

In a letter to William's parents his platoon commander wrote "No words of mine can express my admiration of your son. He was an excellent chap, cool under fire, and never grumbled at work an excellent example to all of us".

As with many of his fellow soldiers, William is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France, on panels 15 to 19.





In addition to the Lynsted Memorial, William is also commemorated on the Woodnesborough, Kent, Civic War Memorial, which is situated in the churchyard of St Mary the Blessed Virgin, Woodnesborough, near Sandwich, Kent. Within this churchyard William is also remembered on the headstone of his parent's grave. In addition, he is remembered in the Deal, Walmer and Sandwich Roll of Honour.

William was posthumously awarded the 1914-15 Star, and the British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1]



William's story illustrates sacrifices made, and the loss suffered by those at home. On his death, William's two young daughters, Ivy and Christina, were orphaned. On his posting abroad they had been sent to live with their maternal uncle Frank Weaver and his wife Alice, who were living at 4 Triggs Cottages, Teynham; the girls were enrolled in Lynsted School and remained with Frank and Alice Weaver, who became the legal guardians of William's 2 daughters.

As legal guardian, Alice received £7 12s 6d (£7.62½p) in February 1917. In September 1919 Alice also received the War Gratuity of £6 10s (£6.50). [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £900 in today's money.

A year after their father's death, on 3 May 1917, Ivy and Christina's maternal uncle, Reginald Weaver, was reported missing in action. Reginald was the younger brother of Frank, with whom William's children had been sent to live. Reginald's death was confirmed on 18 April 1918 and he is also commemorated on the Lynsted memorial and in this book.

Four of William's brothers also served their country. Herbert served in the Royal Field Artillery and saw action in France, Italy and Egypt and survived malaria as well as being kicked in the eyes by a horse. Frederick also served in the Royal Field Artillery in India, where, in 1918, he survived the flu epidemic. Richard and Harry both served in the Army Service Corps. All four survived the war.

William's father did not live to see the end of the war, dying at the age of 60 on 25 October 1918. William's mother died on 5 January 1939 aged 78 and is buried along with his father at Woodnesborough.



Ivy went on to marry Albert Bone in 1927. She died in Canterbury in 1971 aged 62. Christina was married and widowed 3 times, firstly in 1940, then in 1965 and 1989. She died in Canterbury in 1998 aged 91.

Ivy Kathleen Drayson, William's
younger daughter



The photograph below shows Ivy Drayson's wedding day in 1927. Her older sister, Christina, is shown seated on the left.



Back row from left: Herbert Drayson (older brother of William), Harry Bone (groom's older brother), Albert Bone (groom), Ivy Kathleen Drayson, Frank Weaver, Ivy and Christina's maternal uncle, Stanley Bone (groom's younger brother.)

Front row: Christina Drayson (left), Alice Weaver on far right (wife of Frank). The 2 young women are the Weaver's own children and the boys their grandchildren.

The Society is indebted to Julie Rutt, William's granddaughter, who has been able to clarify the family link to Lynsted. Also for the family photographs that she has kindly shared with us.

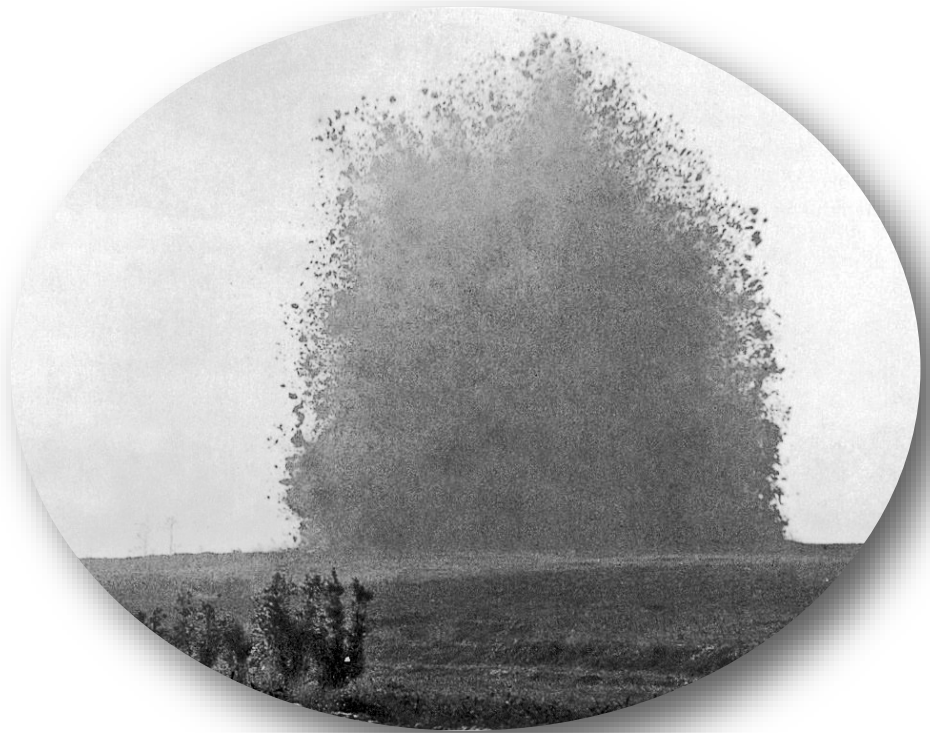


East Kent Gazette, 3 June 1916:

LYNSTED

FARM LABOURER EXEMPTED.- A number of appeals in respect of agricultural employees came before the Faversham Rural Military Service Tribunal on Monday afternoon (Mr.H.T. Bensted presiding). Charles Collins, 23 (single), manager at Monks Farm, Lynsted, for a non-resident tenant, was appealed for by the employer, Mr. Hinge. Two months was granted to give Mr. Hinge an opportunity of finding another man. Arthur Potter (married), in charge of a poultry and fruit farm at Tickham, for Mrs. Evans, whose two sons are serving, was granted six months, and conditional exemption was granted in the case of Alister Fraser, 35 (married), farm bailiff, in the employ of Mr. J.D. Maxted, at Lower Newlands, Teynham. Conditional exemption was also granted in the cases of several waggoners.

The Battle of the Somme



At 7.22 am, eight minutes before Zero Hour, on 1 July 1916, Lieutenant-General Aylmer Hunter-Weston, Commanding Officer of the 29th Division of VIII Corps, gave the order to blow the mine beneath Hawthorn Ridge Redoubt. This heralded the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

It was thought that the early detonation would protect the advancing infantry from falling debris. The result was that it gave the Germans time to move to the rear lip of the crater, set up machine-guns and be ready to face the advance of the British troops.

The explosion from 40,000lbs of ammonal (ammonium nitrate and aluminium powder) was heard in London. At the time it was the largest man-made sound in history.

The explosion was filmed by Geoffrey Malins as part of his 1916 film "The Battle of the Somme". He reported:

"The ground where I stood gave a mighty convulsion. It rocked and swayed. I gripped hold of my tripod to steady myself. Then for all the world like a gigantic sponge, the earth rose high in the air to the height of hundreds of feet. Higher and higher it rose, and with a horrible grinding roar the earth settles back upon itself, leaving in its place a mountain of smoke."

The tunnel to the Hawthorne Ridge crater was re-excavated and used again at the beginning of the Battle of the Ancre on 13 November 1916 in support of an attack on Beaumont-Hamel. This time the advance was successful. Beaumont-Hamel was captured and 2,000 German prisoners taken.



The *Battle of the* Somme



©IWM - Q52

The main British battle in 1916 was fought north of the River Somme between 1 July and 19 November. It is now perhaps best remembered for its heavy casualties. On the opening day, the British army suffered its heaviest ever losses in any 24 hour period: almost 20,000 dead and 60,000 wounded, including 6,300 from the 34th Division, shown here on the first morning.



The poem 'Before Action' by Lt Noel Hodgson, MC, was first published on 29 June 1916 in the weekly paper The New Witness, two days before he went into action with the 9th Battalion the Devonshire Regiment on 1 July 1916.

Before Action

By all the glories of the day
And the cool evening's benison
By that last sunset touch that lay
Upon the hills when day was done,
By beauty lavishly outpoured
And blessings carelessly received,
By all the days that I have lived
Make me a soldier, Lord.

By all of all man's hopes and fears
And all the wonders poets sing,
The laughter of unclouded years,
And every sad and lovely thing;
By the romantic ages stored
With high endeavour that was his,
By all his mad catastrophes
Make me a man, O Lord.

I, that on my familiar hill
Saw with uncomprehending eyes
A hundred of thy sunsets spill
Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,
Ere the sun swings his noonday sword
Must say good-bye to all of this; -
By all delights that I shall miss,
Help me to die, O Lord.

Lt William Noel Hodgson, MC
3 January 1893 – 1 July 1916







**Lance Corporal, G/5053,
7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)**

Killed in action 1 July 1916 Aged 32

Leon was born in 1884 and christened in Lynsted Church on 26 October. He was the son of the Headmaster of Lynsted Board School, Thomas Lumley Ackermann, and schoolmistress Annie Collinson Ackermann (née Lorden). Leon was raised in the School House, now the offices of Lynsted and Norton Primary School, where he lived with his two older brothers, Thomas Lorden and Sydney Lorden, and his younger sister Annie Lorden Grace.



Lynsted Board School and Schools house (left) in 1906, when the Ackermann's were in residence

Leon's mother died in 1910. At the time of the 1911 Census, Leon was listed as an "unemployed" architect and scrivener. Due to several years of bad health, Leon had left his job as an architect and draughtsman in the Rochester offices of Messrs Drake and Boucher. He was still living in the School House along with his father, sister, and brother Sydney, who was now married to Florence, a native of Tipperary, and working as an accountant in the War Office. Also in residence was domestic servant, Lynsted-born Minnie Bootes, a 22 year old widow.

During December 1914, having only just recovered from his 4 years of illness, Leon enlisted in the army in Sittingbourne 'For the Duration of the War'. He was attached to the 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). The Battalion had been formed at Canterbury in September 1914 as part of the Second New Army (K2) then moved to Purfleet where they joined the 55th Brigade of the 18th Division. After first training at Colchester and then Salisbury Plain, he was posted to France, landing at Boulogne on 28 July 1915. During August 1915, Leon saw his first action at Carnoy, then Fricourt and La Boisselle. Companies took turns in occupying the trenches for an average of 8 days. Thus his battalion was gradually introduced to life in the front-line trenches.

In the spring of 1916, the Battalion was in billets at Picquigny, from where it undertook strenuous training in preparation for the Battle of the Somme. This included a full "dress rehearsal" for the Brigade including aeroplanes and flares. On 10 June, training ceased and the Battalion began making its way to the front line.

On 30 June, at 5.30pm, the Battalion moved from its billets in Bray to the assembly trenches in La Pree Wood (now called Bois St Cauchy). Hot tea with rum was prepared for the men in Carnoy Valley. By midnight the men were in position in their respective assembly trenches.

Poignantly, 1 July 1916 dawned a bright and sunny summer's day. At 7am Leon left the wood to take up position on the front line ready for zero hour of 7.30am.



The following report by Captain A G Kenchington of "B" Company, 7th Battalion, The Buffs, on the operations on 1 July 1916 details the events of the day:

Before "Y" day I had collected and stored in No.10 sap necessary bombs and apparatus. I had put notice-boards directing runners to this point at the end of all saps and trenches in the crater area.

At Zero the three sections of each platoon advanced as arranged round the flanks and the other two sections with snipers went over the craters which were very muddy. The left hand party entered the enemy trenches with only one casualty, the platoon Commander Lieut E.H.A. GOSS, who was killed instantly by a shell. This platoon found the rear portion of the crater area quite knocked out of recognition, and soon overcame two bombing parties and three or four snipers who opposed them.

By 8.15 a.m. this party had reported clear and were directed to work across to the help of the other platoon who had sent no news.

The R [Reserve] platoon, leaving No.3 sap and our front line, were met with M.G. fire from a gun at the base of the large chalk dump opposite and from rapid fire from about 10 Germans in BRESLAU TRENCH just W. of the craters. They suffered severely, quite 40% being knocked out as they crossed. The remainder led by the Platoon Commander (2nd Lieut V.G.H. TATAM) doubled half left into the craters and entered the enemy trenches by twos and threes from inside the craters.

The M.G. was firing across the Brigade Front, so this party worked round to get it from inside, two or three snipers with the M.G. harassing them badly. Only 12 men were still attacking.

Formed German bombing parties defended the approaches to this strong point and fierce hand to hand fighting went on for an hour. The M.G. was put out of action by 8.45a.m., by our men sniping at close quarters but the snipers still held out.

During this hand to hand fighting the benefit of properly organised parties was seen as our party killed at least 3 to 1. At this stage apparently only 8 or 9 men were left yet they continued fighting in the trenches and bombing dug-outs. 2nd Lieut V.G.H. TATAM and SERGEANT UPTON P.C. jumped into one trench containing 5 Germans. They despatched these and also 7 more who came out of a side trench one by one to the fight. Afterwards these two (supported by 3 of their men), who had joined them by now, accounted for another party of 6.

The smallness of the party prevented any message being sent back till 9.10 a.m., when reinforcements and bombs were asked for. Meanwhile, judging from reports of my Observer who reported what he could see from the end of the Russian sap; and from what I myself could see when I crossed at 8.30 a.m. to try to get news. I had sent an extra bombing party, and three more snipers to their help with instructions to work round to the far side of the enemy snipers. My No.1 LEWIS GUN which had secured a good target of enemy running up the MONTAUBAN ROAD during the first 10 minutes was now withdrawn and the spare men used to take over more bombs.

At 8.50 a.m. I warned the party in the area as far as possible and turned the STOKES gun for 10 minutes on to the strong point where the enemy were sniping. This had excellent results. A concerted rush on the part of the men remaining (with 4 more bombers sent by Major KEMP-WELCH commanding the 7th QUEENS) carried the dump and the snipers were bayoneted. They died splendidly with heaps of cartridges round them. The M.G. emplacement was found to be



concreted. The gun we kept.

By this time it was 9.30 a.m., I had previously asked for howitzers to re-bombard the dump if this failed, but, on receipt of report "crater Clear" from R platoon at 9.35 a.m. I cancelled this and reported clear.

At 9.40 a.m., I established my H.Q., just near the dump and started on a final tour of the crater trenches to ensure that they were quite clear. Three more Germans were found and killed but otherwise all was clear, and every dugout we could find was bombed.

I re-organised what men I had left and found 18 and one officer. 1 Platoon of "D" Company (No.13) had come to reinforce me by now. I organised

(1) My own 18 men to clear across Brigade front in BRESLAU TRENCH.

(2) No.13 Platoon to clear BRESLAU SUPPORT.

Each party was to send back any groups of prisoners left in their lines and to send off parties up communication trenches to keep touch.

We found that practically all of the other platoons detailed to accompany the leading waves of the QUEENS and EAST SURREYS had been absorbed into these waves and finding a number of Germans still in dugouts we carried on clearing right across the Brigade Front.

I reported to Battalion Headquarters at 11.45 a.m. when clear right across to No.4 sap. Then finding 2nd Lieut. CARMANS platoon (No.13) had also been absorbed either taking back prisoners or reinforcing the line, we cleared back across BRESLAU SUPPORT.

At 12.30 p.m. I reported from the crater area that the Brigade front was cleared, gathered together more of my men (10 of the 18 from original crater party) had been used escorting back our captives.

I now had 1 officer and 20 men. With these I made my way up MINE ALLEY and reported to O.C. 7th BUFFS.

He instructed me to collect available men and consolidate No.2 strong point.

We dug a new trench on what remained of an old one for the left face, cut fire steps on the N.W. face, cleared and fire-stepped that part of POMMIERS TRENCH and put out some wire.

As far as can be ascertained No.7 platoon lost about 30% going over and most of the rest were absorbed into the firing line (except 8 men who escorted prisoners back). No.8 Platoon disappeared in much the same way, Sergeant RUSSELL (in command) and Lance Corporal Gettins killed the crew of an enemy M.G., but left the gun.

Lance Corporal Matthews did excellent work in rallying stragglers of various units and leading them into the line.

*(Signed A.G. KENCHINGTON Capt., "B" Company. 7th (S) Battalion,
THE BUFFS.)*

In the field, 10/7/16

By kind permission of Peter Tabor, the following extract from the diary and reminiscences of his



Grandfather, Henry Tabor, gives a view of the realities of the day. Henry was a wireless operator in the Royal Flying Corps positioned at La Pree Woods:

"Battle of the Somme starts:

The offensive, launched in bright sunlight at 7.30 on the morning of July 1, failed disastrously on most sectors of the 18 mile front. British commanders were so confident they ordered their troops to walk slowly towards the German lines. Once they had been seized, cavalry units would pour through to pursue the fleeing Germans.



Mametz after its capture on 1 July 1916

Even the explosion of several huge mines under the German front line did not prevent their machine-gunners emerging to create havoc among the waves of British infantry.

There was, however, a limited success at the southern end of the line [Editor's note: where Leon was in action] where more imaginative infantry and artillery tactics enabled 18th and 30th Divisions to take all their objectives. British capture Montauban and Mametz; break through towards Bapaume. French attack towards Peronne; reach outskirts of Hardecourt and Curlu;

take Dompierre, Becquincourt, Bussus, and Fay. 5,000 prisoners taken.

Many battalions were virtually annihilated."

The English poet and writer, Siegfried Sassoon, wrote in his private journal of the day:

... all their hope & merriment snuffed out for ever, and their voices fading on the winds of thought, from memory to memory, from hour to hour, until they are no more to be recalled.

In this area of the Somme, the attacks on the day were successful, but at the cost of a huge loss of life. The British casualties on this one day totalled 57,470, the biggest ever suffered by the British army in a single

day; over 19,000 allied troops were killed. Leon was

one of those who died at some time on 1 July

1916. Leon has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France, Pier and Face 5D.



Leon's death was announced in the East Kent Gazette on 22 July 1916. The report wrongly lists Leon as being 29 years of age at the time of his death. It also gives details of his brother Sydney, who served and survived as a Captain in Financial Advisory Staff at the Front:

LYNSTED SOLDIER KILLED.

It is with great regret that we record this week the death of Leon Lorden Ackermann, the third son of Mr and Mrs T.L. Ackermann of Lynsted. Mr Leon Ackermann, who was 29 years of age, enlisted in the Buffs at the outbreak of the war, and at the time of his death he was a Lance Corporal. He was killed on July 1st in the great advance. He was formerly an architect and draughtsman in the offices of Messrs Drake and Boucher, of Rochester, but for four years before the war he suffered bad health and relinquished that position. He had just recovered when the War broke out. He was very popular in his village, and much sympathy is felt with the bereaved family. Another son of Mr and Mrs Ackermann, Mr Sydney Ackermann, is a captain on the Financial Advisory Staff at the Front.

A week later on 29 July 1916, the Faversham and North East Kent News ran the following article:

ROLL OF HONOUR

Lance-Corpl. Leon Lorden Ackermann, The Buffs, third son of Mr T.L. Ackerman, headmaster of Lynsted Council School, was killed in the great advance of July 1st. He was 29 years of age and joined The Buffs at the outbreak of the war. By profession he was an architect and draughtsman, but for four years before the war had suffered from bad health, which had obliged him to relinquish the position he held at Rochester. He had just recovered when the war broke out. Another son of Mr. and Mrs. Ackerman, Mr. Sydney Ackerman, is a captain on the Financial Advisory Staff at the front.

Leon was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1] In September 1916, Leon's father received his owed pay that amounted to £8 6s 1d (£8.30½p). Later, in September 1919 he received the War Gratuity of £6 10s (£6.50p). [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £1,800 in today's money.



At the time of Leon's death his father, pictured right, had retired as the headmaster of Lynsted School and was living in Hope Villa, The Street, Lynsted. He died on 27 January 1936.

On 11 May 1918, the Faversham and North East Kent News announced the promotion to Major of Leon's brother Sydney.









Private, 24469, 11th (Service) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)

Killed in action 1 July 1916 Aged 21

Charlie was born in Lynsted in the first quarter of 1895, the son of Charles Thomas Hollands, the signalman at Teynham railway station, and Alice (née Cornell). He was christened in Teynham Church on 15 May 1895. Charles lived at 6 Albion Place, Greenstreet, along with his three older brothers John Charles, Frederick Thomas and William, and younger brother Edward Frank.

Charlie had worked as a grocer's assistant and at the carriage works of Messrs Egan Bros, Greenstreet. At the time of going to war, he was employed by Sittingbourne Post Office.

Charlie's service records are not available but it is known that he survived for less than a year. He was recruited via "The Group Scheme"; brought in during the spring of 1915 to address a fall in recruitment. The Government was uneasy about imposing compulsory military service, so The Group Scheme was introduced. On 15 July 1915 the Government passed the National Registration Act. All men between the ages of 15 and 65 who were not already in the military were obliged to register, giving details of their employment. The results of this became available by mid-September 1915. It showed there were almost 5 million males of military age who were not in the forces, of which 1.6m were in protected, high or scarce skilled jobs.

Lord Derby was appointed Director-General of Recruiting on 11 October 1915 and on 16 October he launched The Group Scheme, often referred to as The Derby Scheme. Men between the ages of 18 and 40 could continue to enlist voluntarily or attest with an obligation to join if called upon later. Voluntary enlistment would end after the last day of registration, 15 December 1915.

Men who enlisted under The Group Scheme fell into two classes:

Class A - were attested for service, but chose to defer it

Class B - agreed to immediate service, paid a day's army pay for the day they attested, given a grey armband with a red crown as a sign that they had volunteered. They were officially transferred into Section B Army Reserve and sent back home until they were called up.

The men were classified into married and single status and listed in 23 groups according to their year of birth.

The Group Scheme, which was not considered a success, ceased on 1 March 1916. Just over 200,000 men enlisted under the scheme; just over 2 million signed up and were deferred. Only 38% of single men and 54% of married men who were not in reserved occupation had avoided this recruitment. This did much to hasten the government's decision to bring in conscription.

Being born in 1895, Charlie would have been placed in Group 3 and was enlisted on 20 January 1916. He went to the front on 4 May 1916 as part of the 54th Brigade, 18th (Eastern) Division. Preparations were being made for the Battle of the Somme. Charlie's Division rehearsed in detail the manoeuvres required of them in a replica of the actual battlefield that had been prepared in the Picquigny area. This included a full dress rehearsal with aeroplanes and flares. This was overseen by Sir Douglas Haig himself.

By Saturday 1 July 1916, each man knew the exact spot he was to make for, and what to do when he



got there. The Division was in position by 2am. At 6.30am the guns started firing and at 7.22am the enormous explosions of the trench mortars were heard and felt. At 7.30am the first troops went into action in the Battle of Albert, the first of thirteen battles that would form the 141 days of "The Battle of the Somme".

Charlie's Division, along with the 7th (Service) Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment, led the attack up the southern face of Mametz spur.

The war diary of Charlie's Battalion includes the following report of what took place on the day he died:

REPORT ON ATTACK, JULY 1ST, 1916

11th Battalion Royal Fusiliers

The Battalion formed the left assaulting Battalion of the 54th Brigade, the 7th Bedfordshires being on the right. The Manchesters of the 91st Brigade were on our left.

By 1am the Battalion was ready in the forming-up trenches, in the following order:

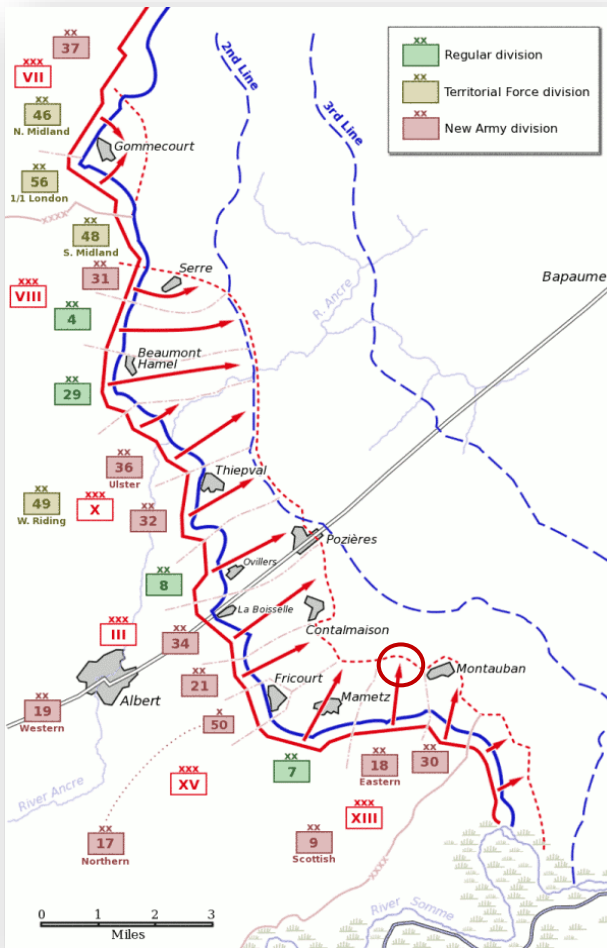
	(_____)	
"A" Coy	(_____)	"B" Coy
	(_____)	
	"C" Coy	

	"D" Coy	

At 7.30am (Zero hour) "A" and "B" Coys led off, advancing in four waves in extended order, the Supporting and Reserve following up in artillery formation. The intervals between the advancing waves from 100 to 150 yards. In comparison with the hurricane bombardment which had opened up by our concentrated artillery, 2" and Stokes Mortars, the enemy's reply was feeble, so that the casualties which we suffered in crossing no-man's-land were few. Some machine guns, however, opened on the flanks, and these knocked out a few, but in no way held up the steady advance. One of these guns was rushed and captured with great dash by L/Cpl Payne of "B" Coy. The enemy's front lines offered no opposition, and Emden Trench was reached bang up to time. In Bund Trench a few Bosch were encountered, but were easily dealt with. At this point it was possible to look round and see how things stood. The 7th Bedfordshires on our right kept touch perfectly with us; on the left the Manchester seemed to be rather hung up. It was, therefore, imperative to watch the left flank, and this fell to Major Hudson, in command of "A" Coy, who was most careful on this point, and was kept well backed by Capt Hoare, in command of "C" Company.

It was on the advance from Bund to Pommiers Trench that 2/Lt Parr Dudley dealt so effectively with a party of 30 Germans who were attempting to counter-attack from the direction of Mametz. He wheeled his platoon half-left and charged them, but unfortunately Parr Dudley was killed – the only one of the party.

The Pommiers Trench was manned to some extent by riflemen, and a machine gun in a bedded emplacement kept up a steady fire even after the first two waves had got into the trench, but the man behind the gun was soon dealt with and his gun captured.



Circle shows Charlie's position on 1 July 1916 on the map of the British objectives for that day.

As, according to schedule time, there was a 20 minutes' wait in this trench, some hand-to-hand fighting took place, as the dug-outs contained lots of Bosch. Many were bombed effectively before they had time to make a bolt into the trench.

The Redoubt and Maple Trench line was a tougher nut to crack, and, as the first wave of Bedfordshires and our men got out of Pommiers, the rifles and machine guns opened fire from the Redoubt and mowed them down.

On the east face of the Redoubt the wire was much damaged, but on the west it was in sufficiently good repair to enable the enemy to hold us. Several times the men reached the wire only to be shot. As the frontal attack on the Redoubt was not progressing, Capt Johnson, commanding "B" Coy, decided to take his men up Black Alley with the intention of bombing up Maple Trench and so into the Redoubt, but the last 60 yards of this trench is straight and a machine gun held him up. He then decided he would attack in the rear over the open, but was bothered by German snipers who were established in Beetle Alley, so he asked 2/Lt Savage, who was with "A" Coy, on the left, to rush them out of the trench. He carried out this operation, so thoroughly and quickly that Capt Johnston was

able to get his men up to the Redoubt without a casualty. The Germans were very thick in the Redoubt, and were firing head and shoulders over the parapet. Capt Johnston put his Lewis guns at the end of Black Alley so as to enfilade the front of the Redoubt, and they successfully wiped out all the Germans who were in the trench which enabled the Bedfordshires and ourselves to dash in and finish the rest. This is practically the story of the Right Company.

The Left Company was unfortunate in losing Lt Nield, who was killed near the German front line. The Pommiers line was reached easily, and the dug-outs in Black Alley received many bombs. At the junction of Pommiers and Black Alley there was some hand-to-hand fighting, a German officer suddenly appearing from the dug-out followed by some men – they were all killed. This company's task was difficult and dangerous, as the Battalion on our left had not secured Dantzic Alley, and the left was completely in the air. 2/Lt Savage was helping "B" Coy by clearing Beetle Alley of snipers, and it was then that he was killed by a sniper while trying to see how things were going on the left. He had been hit in the foot from the very start at 7.30am, but had stuck on and led his men gallantly the whole time. Some good work was done by the Lewis Guns with this Coy, who got their guns into position to command the



approach from Fritz Alley, which was full of Bosche, and it was entirely due to the way in which the machine guns and Savage's platoon dealt with the situation that our left remained secure. Capt Hooke, with his Stokes mortars, rendered great assistance by pounding Fritz Trench and causing the Germans to bolt, presenting a splendid target to our Lewis Guns, who bowled them over in the open.

The Support and Reserve Coys supported closely and did excellent work in repelling small counter-attacks which had been launched from the flanks. The programme was that they should pass through the assaulting Coys at Beetle Trench and secure the final objective of White Trench, but, on consultation with the Commanding Officers, it was decided that it would be a dangerous undertaking while the Brigade on the left and right were so hung up.

The Battalion set to making its strong points and making fire steps, and parties from the Dumps soon came up with wire, stakes, bombs, ammunition and water. The men were all in the best of spirits and seemed delighted with the fight. Later on in the afternoon a reconnaissance was made to White Trench, which was found to be unoccupied – so a small garrison was put here.

Communication: It was very seldom that the telephone worked satisfactorily, but admirable work was done by our Signallers, who, by means of a shutter and flag, succeeded in getting our messages through. One of the finest things witnessed was the performance of Pte Hughes, who, knowing his message to be important, selected the white signalling flag, mounted to the top of the parados in spite of shot and shell which were all round him. He did not give in till a shell dealt him a terrible injury.

It is difficult to pick out any one incident of gallantry and devotion to duty when every man behaved with such dash, but such episodes as the following give an idea of the individual pluck:

(1) Pte H R Wheeler found himself alone in Emden Trench, in which were 7 Germans. Three of these he managed to shoot before his bolt got jammed by a sock breach cover. He retired behind a traverse and jumped on to the top of the trench shooting the remaining four with a revolver he had found.

(2) Sgt Brisby was called upon for assistance by a bombing section who had run into German bombers in Black Alley. He went over from his position in the open on the left of Black Alley, and shot one of the Germans who had thrown bombs at him from a fire step. He then jumped into the trench and bayoneted the remaining three. [Editor's note: Private Wheeler was killed in action on 26 September 1916.]

Mention must be made of the fine way in which the dug-out clearing parties of the 6th Bedfordshires behaved. They did not scruple to enter dug-outs whether they contained live Germans or not, and in this way secured many prisoners.

At the end of the day the Battalion was disposed as follows:

1 Coy in Maple Trench and garrisoning No 5 Strong Point.

3 Coys in Beetle Trench and 1 platoon pushed out as an outpost to the White Trench.

On the night of July 2nd the Battalion was relieved by the 12th Middlesex Regiment.

C C Carr

Lieut Col Commanding 11th Royal Fusiliers 6th July 1916



The Battalion's casualty figures for that day were 47 killed, 6 died of wounds, 148 wounded, 17 missing and 4 shell shocked. At some time, on this first day, Charlie was killed by a sniper's bullet. He had survived just 57 days at the front.

On that day the 18th Division had taken 695 prisoners, had suffered 3,707 casualties, including 45 officers and 871 other ranks who were killed. The wounded numbered 103 Officers and 2,692 Other Ranks.

Captain G H F Nicholls, in his book *The 18th Division in the Great War*, said about the capture of Pommiers Redoubt:

On 1st July, when for the first time the now immense forces of Sir Douglas Haig, attacked on the grand scale, and Britain's civilian soldiers made their 'prentice effort to oust the Germans from the labyrinthine strongholds which they had been strengthening for two years, the 18th was one of the few British Divisions to attain all its objectives. This opening battle of the Somme was, for the 18th, a typical Maxse success - a triumph first of preparation and construction and then grit and determination. The Division never possessed men more magnificent physically than those who fought on 1st July 1916.*

** Referring to Lieut-General Sir Ivor Maxse who trained the 18th Division and commanded them in the field until January 1917.*

Charlie's death was recorded in the following East Kent Gazette report on 22 July 1916:

GREENSTREET. DEATH FROM A SNIPER'S BULLET.

Mr and Mrs Charles Hollands, of Greenstreet have suffered a sad loss by the death of their fourth son Charles, who was a private in the Royal Fusiliers. Young Hollands, who was 21 years of age, was killed by a sniper's bullet on July 1st. He went up with the 1st Derby Groups in January, and went to the front on May 4th. Previous to joining the colours he was on the staff of the Sittingbourne Post Office. Mr and Mrs Hollands have 3 other sons serving viz John in the Royal Navy, Frederick in the 1st Buffs, and William in the RGA. The two soldiers are at the Front. The fifth son joins the services next week. Mr. Hollands has been signalman at the Teynham Station for the past 28 years.

Charlie was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1]

Charlie's older brother, Frederick, who we also commemorate, would be lost 11 weeks later on 15 September 1916. Both are commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

In November 1916, Charlie's mother received his back pay that amounted to £2 7s 0d (£2.35p). In September 1919, she received his War Gratuity of £3. [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £370 in today's money.

Both his other brothers survived the war, although his younger brother Edward was left 40% disabled due to gassing in the trenches and would die in 1955 aged just 57.



East Kent Gazette 9th June 1917:

BAPCHILD

A BAPCHILD SOLDIER'S DISTINCTION

The many friends of Private H.D. Gambell, The Buffs, the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. David Gambell, of Radfield Cottages, Bapchild, will be pleased to learn that he has been recommended for the military medal. Mayor-General C. Rose, commanding the Division, records the following memorandum:- "Your Commanding Officer and Brigade Commander have informed me that you distinguished yourself by your great gallantry and devotion to duty near Guillemont, between the 13th and 18th September, 1916. I have read their report with much pleasure." Private Gambell writes home in good spirits, and the gallant young soldier is fit and well."

Herbert was killed in action on 21 March 1918 and is commemorated in this book.



Private, G/17605, 2nd Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment

Previously Private 3240, East Kent Yeomanry

Killed in action 9 September 1916 Aged 19

Thomas does not appear on the Lynsted Memorial even though, at the time of his death, his parents were living at Homestall Cottages, then in the Parish of Lynsted. Apart from being named on the memorial roll in the regimental chapel of the Royal Sussex Regiment in Chichester Cathedral, he appears on no local war memorials, possibly due to his parent's peripatetic lifestyle. The Society felt it appropriate to commemorate his loss.

The seventh of the nine children of Frederick and Ellen Jane (née Williams), Thomas was born on the 3 April 1897 in Swalecliffe, Kent and christened on 9 May that year in the Church of St John the Baptist. His six elder siblings were James Robert, Ellen, Frederick, Frank, George and Annie, two younger brothers, Ernest, who died in infancy, and Albert.

By the time of the 1901 Census the family were living at 3 Studds Cottages, Herne. At the time of the 1911 Census the family had moved to Pean Cottages, Pean Hill Farm, Canterbury Road, Whitstable, where his father was employed as a horseman. Some time after this the family moved to Homestall Cottages, Lynsted, with his father being employed at Homestall Farm.

Sadly, Thomas's service papers are unavailable, but we do know that he enlisted firstly into the East Kent Yeomanry in Canterbury and was at some time transferred to 2nd Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment. He would serve for less than a year.

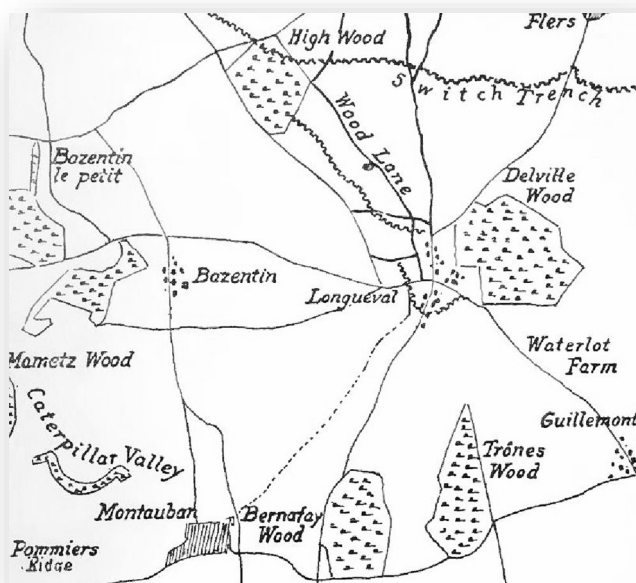
We know that the 2nd Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment arrived in France in 1914 and during that year fought at the Battle of Mons, the subsequent retreat, the Battles of the Marne, the Battle of the Aisne and the First Battle of Ypres. In 1915, the battalion fought at the Battle of Aubers Ridge and the Battle of Loos. In 1916, the battalion moved to the Somme and fought in the Battles of Albert, Bazentin and Pozierres.

In the days preceding Thomas's death, his Battalion's war diary records their position and role in the battle for High Wood:

1 September 1916: Right of High Wood	Enemy's artillery was very active and our trenches were shelled again during the morning. Our heavies shelled a sap-head held by the Germans, and several of the enemy who were occupying shell holes in the vicinity of the sap, were sniped by our men whilst attempting to fall back on their trench over the ridge. In the evening the enemy shelled our Front, Support & Reserve lines. "B" Company (Support) relieved "A" Company in the front line; although very few casualties had taken place, "A" Company had had a very trying time, the front line trench was filled in several places and a number of men buried. The following officers joined the Battalion:- Lieut Wigston G.H. (E. Surrey Regiment), 2/Lt Brading N.B. (E. Surrey Regiment), 2/Lt Alexander J.R., 2/Lt Clarke B., 2/Lt Clarke C.T., 2/Lt Weber-Brown A.M., 2/Lt Collins C.A., 2/Lt Reade C., 2/Lt Burdett J.T., 2/Lt Coleman H.E., 2/Lt Forder C.F., 2/Lt West F.A., 2/Lt Humphreys W.G.
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2 September: High Wood to Becourt Wood	<p>Situation was quiet during the morning. Our artillery opened a bombardment at 2pm which lasted till 5pm, to draw the enemy fire, whilst an attack was carried out on our right by the 50th Division.</p> <p>The Germans replied with heavies on our lines; once again we were fortunate in suffering few casualties in spite of the deadly accurate German fire; the trenches were filled in a good many places.</p> <p>In the evening we were relieved by the 1st Cameron Highlanders and came back in Reserve at BECOURT WOOD. Casualties for this period in the trenches:- Killed 3, Wounded 32, Missing 3. Capt. W.H.W. Apperley joined the Battalion as second in Command & 2/Lt Fewbrell A.H.H. as Transport Officer.</p>
3 September: Becourt Wood	Battalion bivouacked in BECOURT WOOD. Cleaning up etc.
4 September: Becourt Wood	Working party of 2 officers and 250 men was found by Battalion, for burying cable in MAMETZ WOOD. Draft of 328 other ranks joined the Battalion.
5 September: Becourt Wood to Lozenge Wood	In the afternoon the Battalion moved up into Brigade Support in LOZENGE WOOD and bivouacked there; the situation was normal. Draft of 9 other ranks joined the Battalion.
6 September: Lozenge Wood	Battalion remained in the vicinity of the wood all day. At night working parties were found for deepening and widening the trenches near HIGH WOOD.



Position during September 1916

7 September: Lozenge Wood to High Wood (Right)	At about 3pm the Battalion moved up to the trenches on the right of HIGH WOOD and relieved the 2nd Welsh in the firing line. Situation was then quiet.
8 September High Wood (Right)	During the early morning the enemy shelled our trenches heavily and we suffered several casualties, the trench being filled in places. Casualties this day:- Killed 5; Wounded 15. In the evening carrying parties were found to carry ammunition and bombs to front line for the next day's attack.
9 September: High Wood (Right)	<p>Draft of 4 other ranks joined the Battalion. The 3rd Brigade was relieved in the morning by the 2nd Brigade and the 10th Glosters (1st Brigade) came up from BECOURT WOOD in Support. The Germans were very active all day with their artillery. Orders were received that the 2nd Brigade with one Battalion each of the 1st and 3rd Brigades would attack and capture the German trench in HIGH WOOD and to the east.</p> <p>At 4.45pm, in conjunction with the 1st Northamptons on our left and the 2nd K.R.R.C. on our right, the Battalion advanced to the attack, our objective being a portion of the trench WOOD LANE. In spite of very heavy artillery and Machine Gun fire, the attacking line which consisted of "C" and "D" Companies, advanced steadily and in splendid order, closely followed by "A" Company, which was to form an outpost line in front, and "B" Company which was to consolidate "D" Company secured the objective with few losses. "C" Company on the left was less fortunate, suffering rather heavily from Machine Gun fire from HIGH WOOD. It entered the enemy trench, however with little difficulty. "A" Company pushed through and advanced some distance in front of the captured line, accounting for several of the enemy who had run back. On our right the 60th Rifles gained their objective, but the Northamptons on our left were driven back by an intense fire. This left our flank exposed and a defensive flank was dug connecting the captured line with their original front line. By dark consolidation was well under way. Several prisoners were captured and one Maxim Gun which was secured by the Battalion Scout Sergeant. Our casualties were as follows:-</p> <p>Officers: Killed: 2/Lt Forder C.F. and Capt. D'A Harvey, 2/Lt G.L.Reade, 2/Lt W.G. Humphreys, 2/Lt J.T. Clarke, 2/Lt G.H.E. Coleman.</p> <p>Wounded: Captain F.C. Sainton,, 2/Lt C.A. Collins, Capt. H. Wigston, 2/Lt Weber-Brown.</p> <p>Other Ranks: 43 killed <i>[records now show that 93 other ranks died on this day]</i> , 146 wounded, 59 missing, 4 wounded and missing.</p>

Action on the 9 September had started disappointingly, when the exploding of a mine on the eastern corner of the wood failed to prevent a German attack. The crater was 140 feet across and



35 feet deep and remains, to this day, as a duck pond. Along with 2nd Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps, Thomas's Battalion succeeded in securing their gains by digging in and forming a connection with the line in High Wood itself.

The battle for High Wood lasted for 64 days, beginning on the 14 July and ending on 12 September 1916, just 3 days after Thomas's death. It was the longest single battle of the war and given several different names including "The rottenest place on the Western Front" and "The Hell of High Wood".

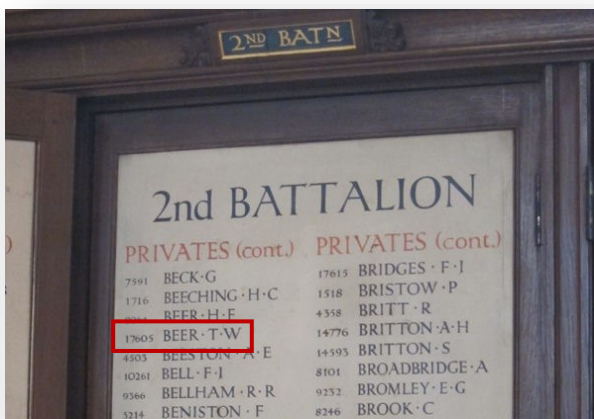
High Wood, despite still being regularly shelled, was never retaken by the Germans. It is thought that the bodies of around 10,000 British and German soldiers still lie there.

We know that Thomas served for less than a year. It is unclear how long he served overseas. Legally he would have only served for around 5 months, but it is clear that many lied about their age to sail for France.

Thomas is buried in Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval, Somme, France. Grave Ref: XVI. A. 1.



His name also appears on the memorial wall in St George's Chapel, Chichester Cathedral, the memorial chapel of the Royal Sussex Regiment, along with all those of the regiment that died in the First World War.





Thomas was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. *[See Appendix 1]*

In April 1917 , Thomas's mother received his owed pay of £3 7s 2d (£3.36p). In September 1919, she also received his War Gratuity that amounted to £3. *[See Appendix 2]* Taken together these amount to roughly £320 in today's money.



Frederick Thomas HOLLANDS



Lance Corporal, G/8980, 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

Killed in action 15 September 1916 Aged 27

Frederick was born in Lynsted in 1889 and christened in Teynham Church on 9 October. He was the son of Teynham railway signalman, Charles Thomas and Alice Hollands (née Cornell). The family, which included his older brother John Charles, and younger brothers William, Charlie (who predeceased him and is also commemorated in this book) and Edward Frank, lived at 6 Albion Place, Greenstreet, Lynsted. Frederick had worked as a carpenter and carriage painter at Messrs Egan Bros carriage works in Greenstreet. At some time between enlistment and mobilisation Frederick worked for Sittingbourne Post Office, which was shorthanded.

Frederick was a locally renowned sportsman playing half-back for the Teynham football team along with Thomas Wigg, another casualty of the war whose biography is included in this book.

On 9 December 1915, Frederick enlisted in Sittingbourne and was mobilised on 10 February. He left for France on 1 June 1916. He was killed just 107 days later, only 77 days after his brother, on the first day of the Battle of Flers Courcellette. Coincidentally, this was the first day the British engaged the enemy with tanks - disastrously as it turned out.

The War Diary of Frederick's battalion records their movements from the time of his arrival until his death. It gives a taste of how hard his short service would have been:

1916	Position	
June 18	Tatinghem	Arrival of 56 reinforcement "other ranks"
19-24	"	In billets at the disposal of 2 nd Army Training School
25	"	Inspection by Brig General Nicholson who complimented the battalion on its quantity and quality of their work in the trenches and their smartness on parade
26	"	Marched to Noordpeene
27	Noordpeene	Marched to Rietveld
28-30	Rietveld	Training
July 1	"	Training – 59 reinforcement "other ranks" arrived
2-3	"	Training
4	"	Training – 42 reinforcement "other ranks" arrived
5-11	"	Training
12-13	"	
14	"	Marched to Camp N Proveh
15	Camp N	
16	Camp N	Entrained to Ypres
17	In trenches	INTO TRENCHES Relieved 7th Somerset regiment in Railway Wood Sector
July 18	"	5 "other ranks" wounded in action
19	"	3 "other ranks" wounded in action
20	"	3 "other ranks" wounded in action



1916	Position	
21	“	Officer wounded in action 1 “other ranks” wounded 1 “other ranks” killed in action
22	“	1 “other ranks” wounded in action
23	“	2 wounded in action
24	“	2 wounded in action
25	“	Battalion relieved back to billets in Ypres
26	Ypres	
27	“	1 OR wounded in action
29	“	Proceeded to billets in Poperinghe
30-31	“	
August 1	Poperinghe	<i>Frederick made Lance Corporal (unpaid)</i>
2	“	Entrained to Douzens (6 hours) then by road to camp at Amplier
3	Amplier	
4	“	Entrained to Puchevillier via Sarton Mirieux
5-6	Puchevillier	
7	“	Marched to Acheux via Raincheval, Arqueves and Louvencourt
8	Acheux	
9		Relieved 1 st West Yorks in trenches south of Beaumont Hamel
10	In trenches	Wire cutting 1 “other ranks” wounded
11	“	Wire cutting 1 “other ranks” died of wounds, 10 “other ranks” wounded
12	“	Battalion relieved to camp in woods, 6 “other ranks” wounded
13	Camp in woods	
14	“	Relieved by Yorks and Lancs to billets at Beausart
15	Beausart	
16-19	“	Working parties under Corps of Signals
20	In trenches	Relieved 8 th Beds from Broadway to Jacobs Ladders opposite Beaumont Hamel
21	“	6 “other ranks” wounded
22	“	Patrol taken out towards Beaumont Hamel, no enemy encountered
23	“	Heavy shelling from enemy. 1 “other ranks” killed, 2 “other ranks” wounded. Patrol reconnoitred enemy wire and crater
24	“	
25	“	1 “other ranks” wounded in action
26	“	



1916	Position	
27	"	Relieved by 2 nd Worcester Regiment in afternoon and proceeded by road to camp at Bertramcourt
28	Bertramcourt	Proceeded by road to camp at Amplier
29	Amplier	Proceeded by road to billets at Naours – 6 "other ranks" reinforcements arrived
30	Naours	2 "other ranks" reinforcements arrived
31	"	
Sept 1-5	"	
6	"	Proceeded by road to billets in Rainneville via Flesselles and Villers Bocage
7	Rainneville	Proceeded by road to billets in Corbie via Cardonnette, Allonville, Querrieu and La Neuville
8	Corbie	Proceeded by road to Bois de Tailles and went into camp – 6 "other ranks" wounded in bomb accident
9-10	Bois de Tailles	
11	"	Marched to neighbourhood of German Wood under bombardment. 1 "other ranks" killed and 8 "other ranks" wounded through accidental exploding of a grenade on the march.
12	German Wood	Took over support trenches S E of Guillemont
13	In trenches Wedge Wood	
14	In trenches	Moved up by night to assembly trench N E of Leuze Wood
15	In trenches	Took part in attack on German line running N E Bois de Bouleaux. Casualties: 3 officers killed 53 "other ranks" killed 1 officer missing (later confirmed killed) 58 "other ranks" missing 2 officers wounded and missing (1 later confirmed killed) 7 "other ranks" wounded and missing 1 officer died of wounds (in September 1916) 3 officers wounded 183 "other ranks" wounded Battalion returned to support trench at 7pm.



Numbers were later confirmed: 126 killed, of which 5 were officers. Only 31 of those who died on 15 September 1916 have a known grave. Those whose bodies were not recovered, like Frederick, appear on the Thiepval Memorial. His brother Charlie is also commemorated on this memorial.

Events of 15 September 1916 are best described in "A Short History of the 6th Division" written in 1920 by Major-General T O Marden CB, CMG:

The British objective for the 15th September was Gueudecourt-Flers-Lesboeufs-Morval - the XIV Corps (Guards and 6th Division) to capture the two latter. It was the first occasion on which tanks were employed, and as far as the Division was concerned was a failure, for of the three allotted to the 6th Division two broke down before starting, and the third, moving off in accordance with orders long before the infantry, had its periscope shot off, its peep-holes blinded, was riddled by armour-piercing bullets, and had to come back without achieving anything. This again found a parallel in the attack on the Quadrilateral, near St. Quentin, on 18th September 1918, when the tanks were ineffective. To facilitate the movement of the tanks a gap of about 200 yards had been left in the creeping barrage. This gap unfortunately coincided with the strongest point of the Quadrilateral. The barrage, moreover, had passed over the German trenches by the time the infantry advanced; the latter had, consequently, to attack up the glacis-like slopes without any artillery support except the bombardment. This, owing to the enemy's trenches not having been accurately located, was ineffective.

The 16th Infantry Brigade attacked on a battalion front - one company of the Bedfords bombing up the trench from Leuze Wood, and the remainder over the open to the north against the south-west face. The Buffs and York and Lancasters supported the attack, but in spite of the greatest gallantry could not take the Strong Point.

The 1st Leicesters and the Norfolks passing through the entrenched Foresters and Suffolks, attacked the Quadrilateral from the north-west with equal drive, but they too failed. Some ground, however, was made, and by 10 a.m. the 16th Infantry Brigade on the south, and the 71st Infantry Brigade on the north, were digging in close to the enemy's wire and trenches. During the day constant reports arrived that the Guards had gained their objectives, and that tanks and cheering men were moving through Lesboeufs. It was not until the following morning that this report was proved to be incorrect, and that it was Flers which had been captured. In the meantime it appeared to the Divisional G.O.C. (General Ross) that the prospect of a break-through on a large scale was prejudiced solely by the repulse of the 6th Division. He therefore ordered a night attack on the flanks of the Quadrilateral to be executed by two battalions of the 18th Infantry Brigade (Brig.-Gen. R. J. Bridgford). These battalions, the 2nd Durham Light Infantry and the 11th Essex, moved round after dark and attacked; the former from the north, the latter from the south-east to the left of the 16th Infantry Brigade. The 11th Essex lost direction, while the 2nd D.L.I. bombed down a trench only to find that it did not lead into the Strong Point. Except on the 6th Divisional front and at High Wood, which was captured during the night, the whole line had advanced, and it was a bitter blow to the Division to think that their sacrifices had been in vain.

The Faversham and North East Kent News included the following article in its edition of 24 November 1916, which describes how Frederick's death was first received by his brother, William, who was on his way to the front:

LYNSTED FAMILY'S SECOND LOSS.

The shadow of the War is falling heavily over the home of Mr. and Mrs Charles Thos. Hollands, of 6, Albion Place, Greenstreet. In the early part of this year they had four sons serving in H.M.Forces. Since the middle of the year, alas! two of them have been killed, namely Private Charles Hollands, of the Royal Fusiliers, and Lance-Corpl. Frederick Thomas Hollands, of the Buffs. Charles, who was 21 years of age, was killed by a sniper (as we recorded at the time) on July 1st, the day that the great push commenced. Frederick was killed in the renewed push made on the 15th September. Mr and Mrs Hollands have therefore sad reasons to remember the commencement of these two British offensives. The other two sons serving are William Hollands in the A.S.C. Mechanical Transport, and John Hollands (the eldest of the family) who is in the Naval Sick Bay Reserve at Chatham. There is yet one other son (the youngest), who is employed at the Faversham Co-operative Society's Stores. He is just turned 18 and it is probable he, too, will be called upon early in the new year, in which event all five sons will have served their country.

The news of the death of Lance-Corpl. Fred Hollands was received in the first instance from his brother William, of the Mechanised Transport. It appears that on September 15th he was going up to the firing line with an Ammunition Column when he met the Buffs Battalion to which his brother belonged, or rather those that remained of it, coming out of the trenches. On inquiring after his brother he learned the melancholy news that he had been killed in action. The deceased was 27 years of age. The last letter his parents received from him was dated September 12th – three days before his death. In this letter he told them not to worry if they did not hear from him again for a little while as he might not have the opportunity to write. He added that they could depend upon it that wherever he went and whatever he was called upon to do he would do his best. And he carried that out to the sacrifice of his life.

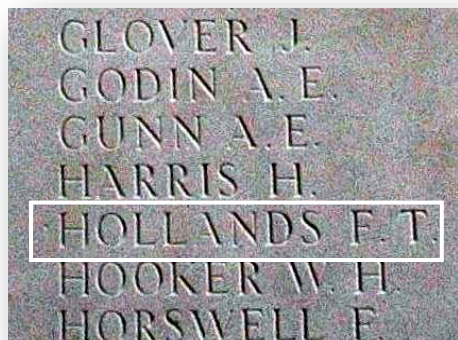
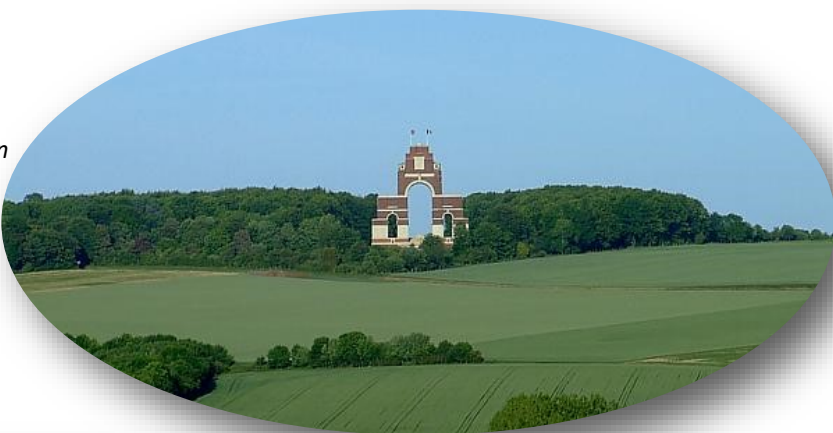
Both he and the other son who was killed formerly worked at the carriage building works of Messrs. Egan Bros., Greenstreet. Some time after war broke out, however, they both joined the postal delivery staff at the Sittingbourne post Office, owing to the scarcity of men. Fred was a well-known local footballer.

Mr C T Hollands, the father of these patriotic sons, has for 28 years been a signalman at Teynham Railway Station.



Frederick Thomas HOLLANDS

Frederick is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France, where his brother Charlie is also remembered.



Frederick was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. *[See Appendix 1]*

In February 1917, Frederick's father received his money owed, amounting to £1 17s 1d (£1.85½). In September 1919, he received the War Gratuity of £3. *[See Appendix 2]* Taken together these amount to roughly £300 in today's money.







Private, G/9718

6th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

Killed in action 7 October 1916 Aged 40

George was born in the spring of 1876. One quarter Italian by his grandfather, John, who was a native of Tuscany, Italy. His father William was born in London and his mother, Alice (née Gambrell), in Wychling. George was born, lived and enlisted in Sittingbourne. He had four older siblings: Elizabeth Ann, Alice, John and William, and three younger brothers, Walter, Frederick and Albert.

George and his family seem to have led peripatetic lives and familiar with untimely deaths and ventures overseas. His father died in 1896 at age 59. Sadly, just 2 years later on 9 May 1898, his mother was admitted to Chartham Lunatic Asylum where she died just 3½ months later on 25 July aged just 52.

At the time of the 1901 Census George was working as a brickfield labourer and boarding at 65 Albion Terrace, Sittingbourne. His younger brothers Frederick and Albert, who had been orphaned at ages 15 and 12, were living with their elder siblings Alice and William respectively. Alice was married to Harry John Baker and had 5 children before dying in 1904 aged 35.

In May 1906, George sailed aboard the “Siberian” to Halifax, Nova Scotia, no doubt in search of better prospects. Whilst he was away his older brother John died in 1907 aged 36. George would return home on 16 December 1911 aboard the “Victorian”. He must have had positive news to report as he returned to Nova Scotia aboard the “Corsican”, on 7 March 1912, accompanied by his younger married brothers Walter and Fred.

Walter’s wife, Rose, and their two children, Lilian and Daisy, went to join him on 23 August 1912. Walter obviously made a life for himself and his family in Canada, dying in 1952 in Haldimand, Ontario. Rose died in 1960. Fred’s wife and their daughter, Lilian, sailed to join him on 5 July 1912, but appeared to return shortly afterwards to Sittingbourne along with George. Fred would also served in WW1 in the Royal Engineers Railway Construction Company and died in Sittingbourne in 1968.

On 5 December 1912, George’s older brother, William, sailed on the “Corinthic” to Wellington, New Zealand. William’s wife Emily, daughter Pearl and younger brother Albert sailed to join him aboard the “Rotorua” on 3 July 1913. William remained in New Zealand, dying in Lower Hutt, Wellington, on 28 October 1952.

George’s eldest sister, Elizabeth, remained in the area and married Walter Dive. They lived in Bakers Cottage, West End, Greenstreet, Lynsted; hence the fact that George was recorded on the Lynsted memorial. Elizabeth’s child, Walter, and his wife are buried in Lynsted Churchyard extension.

George’s service records were not available but we know he served for less than a year. We know his battalion took part in the Battle of Loos in 1915. In 1916, it fought in the Battles of Albert, Pozieres and Transloy Ridges. The latter was fought from 1 - 18 October 1916, George was killed in action on the seventh day of the battle.

The Battle of the Transloy Ridges took place during worsening weather and appalling battlefield



conditions. At every stage the Germans put up a very strong resistance. The battle started on 1 October and it was not until the afternoon of 3 October that the objectives were secured. Follow-up attacks were delayed by atrocious weather but during this time George's Battalion War Diary states that all was quiet but suffered under heavy rain. The Battalion was involved in digging a communication trench. After a rest day on 5 October, they moved up to the front line trenches at Guedecourt on the night of 6 October.

On the morning of 7 October lengthy, extremely detailed and ambitious orders were issued. In retrospect, it is easy to see how these detailed plans could go disastrously wrong if any part of the strategy was to fail, each progressive action being reliant on the success of the preceding order. The orders concluded that rum would be offered to all those who wanted it prior to the advance.

At 1.45pm the men advanced. Six divisions were involved and the action resulted in heavy British casualties and little success except for the capture of Le Sars. The terrible conditions and continuous rain hampered the removal of casualties and stifled further forward moves. Some progress was made but the action failed to secure all battle objectives.

The War Diary entry for the day:

Quiet morning. At 1.30 pm the enemy opened heavy machine gun fire and shrapnel barrage on the front line. At 1.45 pm the attack commenced. Very heavy machine gun fire was opened, which held up "C" Company on the right. "A" and "B" companies reached the 1st objective with fairly heavy casualties but on advancing from 1st to 2nd objectives were completely held up with machine gun fire. Twenty men of "C" Company succeeded in getting into the trench, with troops from the 61st Brigade, and advanced with them.

The 1st objective was held until 12 midnight when the Battalion was relieved by the 6th Queen's. The 6th Royal West Kent Regiment were held up to the left by machine gun fire; the 61st Brigade on the right attained their objective. On relief the Battalion went back to bivouacs in Longueval Valley.

The following casualties were suffered during the day. Officers killed 8. (Lieut Hatch, 2/Lt Ommaney, 2/Lt Norrie, 2/Lt Routley, 2/Lt Lott, 2/Lt Harnett, 2/Lt Moss, Capt Pagen Royal Army Medical Corps [the Battalion's Medical Officer]. Wounded 12. Lt Col T G Cope DSO, Lieut Cumberbatch, Lieut Bond, Lieut Chapman, 2/Lt Kidd, 2/Lt Wooldridge, 2/Lt Taylor, 2/Lt Springay Mason, 2/Lt Turk, 2/Lt Jacobs. [2/Lt Hanmer was also killed.]

Other ranks killed, wounded and missing, 347.



British soldiers moving a 60 pounder gun into position at the Battle of Transloy Ridges

The diary was written by Captain John Campbell Page, the only officer in the battalion who escaped being killed or wounded on 7 October 1916. He led just 40 other ranks from the field after the Battle of the Transloy Ridges. He was subsequently awarded the Military Cross.

Interestingly, the diary records that only 4 prisoners were taken. The Battalion orders, issued that morning, emphasised the number of prisoners that would be put to use in retrieving the dead and injured.

The “Field State” list for the day prior to George’s death, compared with that completed on 13 October prior to the next attack, highlights other logistical losses:

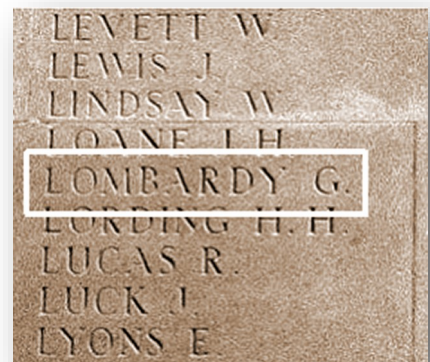
FIGHTING STRENGTH	6 October 1916	13 October 1916	Losses & gains
Officers	41	19	-22
Other ranks	783	449	-334
Riding horses	13	13	
Pack horses	41	43	+2
Wagons for Lewis guns	2	2	
Machine guns	10	6	-4
Ambulances	1	1	
Tool carts	2	2	
Small arms ammunition carts	5	5	
Water carts	2	2	
Rifles	740	444	-296

The days after George’s death saw orders for a fresh attack issued late on 13 October. These ignored the desperate conditions and physical state of the attacking troops. On the 18 October the subsequent early morning assault witnessed heroic efforts to advance but minimal gains were made against resolute defenders, well supported by accurate artillery fire. At the end of the battle the advance could be measured in yards. Continuing bad weather as the war entered into another autumn meant that fighting on the Somme was by now coming to an end.

On 7 October, of the 144 men of the 6th Battalion killed during the Battle of Transloy Ridges, 129 died along with George. Only 43 have known graves. The others, like George, are commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and panel 5D.

George was Lynsted’s oldest casualty and was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. *[See Appendix 1]*

In March 1917, George’s sister Elizabeth received his owed pay amounting to £4 12s 10d (£4.64p). In November she also received his War Gratuity of £3. *[See Appendix 2]* Taken together these amount to roughly £600 in today’s money.







Lance Corporal, G/22397

32nd (Service) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)

Killed in action 10 October 1916 Aged 24

Unfortunately, the Lynsted War Memorial incorrectly lists Percy Frederick as “Frederick Percy”. The son of Martha Emma Smith, Percy was born in the summer of 1892 in Erriotwood. He was christened in Lynsted Church on 14 August the same year. In 1896, when Percy was 4 years old, Martha married Robert Morse Packham, the then licensee of The Foxhunters Public House in Erriotwood.

By the time of the 1911 Census Percy was living with his maternal Uncle Ernest, Aunt Mary and six cousins at Eynsford railway station. Ernest was the stationmaster and, along with one of his cousins, Percy was employed as a Railway Clerk. Shortly after the 1911 Census was undertaken, Percy’s mother died aged 43.

Percy’s service records are not available but it is known he was living in Herne Hill (South London) at the time of his enlistment in Whitehall. We also know that he served for less than a year. The regimental history of the 32nd (East Ham) Battalion, The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), tells us that it was formed in London on the 18th October 1915 by the Mayor and Borough of East Ham. They joined the 124th Brigade, 41st Division at Aldershot in November 1915, and then proceeded to France on the 5th May 1916 where they were based between Hazebrouck and Bailleul. In 1916, they saw action for the first time on the first day of The Battle of Flers-Courcelette. The following extract from “History of the Royal Fusiliers”, by H.C. O’Neil details their baptism of fire on 15th September 1916, the first day of the battle:

For the 26th and 32nd Battalions it was their first experience of battle. They had only been in France four months, but both of them created an excellent precedent in their first action. Each of them was in support, the 32nd on the right and the 26th on the left, following the 10th Queen’s R.W.S. Regiment and the 21st K.R.R.C. Three tanks were allotted to the brigade.

At 6.20 a.m. the leading waves moved off. The 32nd, who had been assembled some fifty yards inside Delville Wood, advanced with the utmost precision with the 14th Division on their right. The barrage was followed very closely, and the battalion met with little resistance in Tea Support Trench and Switch Trench, halfway to Flers. They had been advancing in four waves originally, but at this point the fourth wave was left behind to consolidate, and the other three waves became mixed up with the survivors of the 10th Queen’s and, on the flanks, with men of the 14th Division and of the 26th Battalion, who had lost direction. When Switch Trench had been won the battalion was reduced to two parties, under Captain H. A. Robinson and Lieutenant W. V. Aston respectively. Robinson pushed on with his party, about 80 strong, beyond Flers, capturing three field guns, five Bavarian officers and about 40 other ranks. The field guns were later destroyed by the Germans’ concentrated artillery fire. Aston’s party, after being held up some time by machine gun fire, advanced with a tank beyond Flers. The battalion in this very successful advance lost 10 officers (wounded) and 283 other ranks killed, wounded and missing.

The 26th Battalion advanced with the 32nd against little resistance, but in the early part of the action the left battalion passed through our own barrage. Captain Etchells was at this



moment senior officer on the left of the brigade front, and he promptly and coolly reorganised the line. With this readjustment the troops were able to advance again. Later in the morning there was a check on the brigade front, but the same officer went forward to a tank lying south of Flers and arranged that the 26th would follow if the tank would lead. This arrangement was carried out. The tank moved along the south side of Flers, assisting the troops who were in the village by firing on the retreating enemy and also assisting the 26th to get well ahead. In the late afternoon the battalion were north and east of the village. In the battle the 26th lost 9 officers (5 of them killed) and 255 other ranks killed, wounded and missing. The losses of both battalions, though very heavy considering the numbers involved, were less than might have been expected, for the German artillery, though late in starting, was most skilfully handled. The smallest parties moving in the battle zone at once became a target. At times even a single stretcher party was marked down. It was for the greatest courage and devotion to duty under these conditions that the medical officer of the 26th, Lieutenant J. McIntyre, R.A.M.C., was awarded the M.C. He was four times buried by shell explosions, but each time recommenced his work of attending to the wounded.

One of the singular points about this action is that the tanks impressed our own men more than the enemy, though at one point the Fusiliers were amused to see a panic among the enemy, who caught a drift of a tank's exhaust fumes. They imagined it a new form of gas, and attempted to adjust their gas helmets before retiring.

The 32nd Battalion were relieved on the morning of the 16th, but one company of the 26th remained at the front till night, when they followed the rest of the battalion and the 32nd to support positions.

The Battalion was kept very busy between battles taking part in daily working parties for wire-cutting and trench digging.

The circumstances and exact timing of Percy's death are unclear. Records show that he was, along with several of his comrades, originally recorded as having been killed in action during the Battle of Transloy Ridges at some time between 4 and 10 October 1916. Post war, his death was registered as being on 10 October. The Battalion's War Diary for this period show that it was not the easiest of situations to report:

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of events and information	Casualties
Near Edge Hill Station Camp	1 Oct 1916	1.00am 2.30pm 4.00pm - 7.pm	Winter time came into use. Watches moved back 1 hour. Conference of officers. Washing of clothes at Vivier Mill. Manning orders received.	
"	2 Oct	7.30am 8.45am 1.30am 9.30am	Camp struck. Battalion parade. C.O's inspection. Marched to camp at Pommiers Redoubt, arriving at 7.15pm. Bivouacs erected.	1 OR



Place	Date	Hour	Summary of events and information	Casualties
Pommiers Redoubt	3 Oct	2pm	Battalion marched to support trenches at Sunken Road arriving 9pm. Major M C Clark commanding and Capt M C B Smith adjutant.	2 OR
Support trenches	4 Oct		Under orders to move forward. Capt M C B Clark wounded at 12 noon by premature burst of our own high explosive shrapnel. Capt Cooper arrives about 9.30pm. Movement order suspended for 24 hours.	2 officers 38 OR
	5 Oct	6.30pm	Enemy artillery very active both day & night. Large number of 5.9s searching for our batteries near Fish Alley etc. Strength going into battle was 14 officers, 393 other ranks. Battalion relieved 11 th Royal West Surreys. Battalion HQ at Factory Corner. Cellars fitted up by previous German owners with luxurious furniture. Including 4 poster & velvet covered chairs. Guides led Company to wrong trenches, but these were put right by Adjutant & 2 nd Lt Edwards. Factory Corner was shelled incessantly day & night. Ground sound.	
Gird Support & advanced trenches	6 Oct	11.30pm	Enemy artillery very active during entire day. Battalion HQ moved to front line & scooped out temporary shelter. Whole Battalion worked all night in digging new trench which should have been done previous night but Royal Engineers lost way. Practically completed at daybreak.	3 OR
	7 Oct		New trench was not occupied as it was found 26 th Royal Fusiliers had not dug opposite their front to link up with ours. Our Heavy Artillery fired short for 5 hours & did great damage to our trenches. All four company commanders were evacuated with severe shell shock & but for wet soil, shells would have caused very heavy casualties. The Battalion attacked at 1.45pm but was unsuccessful. See special report attached. <i>[An extract from this report can be seen on the following page.]</i>	1 officer 14 OR
	8 Oct		Battalion HQ was established in old German dugout in Gird Trench. Commanding officer left to attend conference at Brigade HQ at 3pm. Enemy appeared massing for counter attack at 5pm. Intense hostile aeroplane activity. Our shrapnel probably prevented this.	2 OR



Place	Date	Hour	Summary of events and information	Casualties
	9 Oct		Draft of 3 officers & 19 other ranks arrived at Transport line. Day was spent consolidating front line. Enemy came out under Red Cross flag to collect wounded. We extemporised Red Cross flag with aid of facings from Hun officers tunic. Practically all dead & wounded recorded.	1 OR
	10 Oct	9.39pm	10 hostile planes very active flying over our front & support line. New communication trenches were dug & front line improved. Men very exhausted. Battalion relieved at 9.30pm by 2nd Royal Scots. Casualties during tour: officers 11, other ranks 229.	17 OR
Mametz Wood	11 Oct		Battalion arrived at Mametz Wood at 5.30am. Proceeding by train to Becordal Camp at 10.00am. Day spent cleaning equipment and reorganising.	1 OR

From a starting point of 14 officers and 393 men on 5 October, by 10 October the Battalion suffered 3 officers killed, 8 officers wounded or missing, 78 other ranks killed, 151 other ranks wounded or missing.

The following extract from the official report by the 124th Infantry Brigade (of which Percy's Battalion was a part) of the action on 7 October 1916 shows how chaotic the situation became due to poor communication:

Preliminary bombardment

Constant reports were received from the front line that heavy shells from our own batteries were falling between Gird Support & the front line. Artillery Liaison Officers were informed, but complaints continued.

7th. Oct Attack

At the commencement of the action 32nd.Bn.R.Fusiliers were in touch with 8th.Bn.R.Fusiliers (36th.Inf.Bde.) on the right, and the 26th.Bn.R.Fusiliers were in touch with the 122nd.Inf.Bde., on the left.

At 1.45pm. The leading infantry advanced. They were throughout subjected to heavy M.G. fire both from the flanks and from the front, the fire from the flanks being at apparently close range and fire from the front more distant.

Enemy also opened a barrage but the greater number of casualties were due to M.G. fire.

A large number of conflicting reports were received during the course of action, but it appears to be clearly established that none of the Infantry reached the first objective but were held up about 200 yds. in front of it.



The 32nd.Bn.R.Fusiliers lost touch with the 8th.Bn.R.Fusiliers who appear to have left a gap across the road early in the action. 32nd.Bn.R.Fusiliers were ordered to get in touch with the 8th.Bn.R.Fusiliers as soon as possible but did not succeed in doing so until the morning of the 8th.

Touch appeared to have been maintained throughout with the 122nd.Inf.Bde.

Between 4pm. & 5pm. Messages were received from 26th.Bn.R.Fusiliers that reinforcements were urgently needed.

4pm. 21st.Bn.K.R.R.C. ordered to reinforce and 10th.Bn."Queens" were ordered to move their whole battalion into the Gird Support and new assembly trenches.

26th.Bn.R.Fusiliers warned of both these moves.

Message received 5.12pm. from 21st.Bn.K.R.R.C. reported that 15th.Hants on left of the 26th.Bn.R.Fusiliers had had very heavy casualties. In order to secure the left flank 1 Coy. of the 10th."Queens" were ordered to reinforce the 26th.Bn.R.Fusiliers.

5.50pm. Orders were issued to all units to dig in on their present positions and hold them at all costs.

The 4 Vickers Guns in reserve were moved up to the new front line.

It is therefore not surprising that on his burial records Percy is firstly registered as an "unknown British Soldier". Percy was originally interred in the Factory Corner Cemetery, which was situated close to where he fell. He was later exhumed and reinterred in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) Burial Ground in Flers, Grave Ref: XII.C.1. It may have been at this time that his body's identity was confirmed.

Percy's step-father requested that his headstone be engraved with the words "God loved him best and took him back".

Though Percy served for less than a year, he had attained the rank of Lance Corporal. He was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1]

In October 1917 Percy's step-father received his owed money amounting to £5 1s 11d (£5.09½p). A year later he received a further £2 1s 6d (£2.07½p). He received his War Gratuity of £3 in October 1919. [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £670 in today's money.







East Kent Gazette, 2 December 1916:

YOUNG MAN HELD TO SERVICE.

At the East Kent Appeal Tribunal, Canterbury, last week, the case of a young man, 19, single, horse feeder carter and stockman, in the employ of his father, of Lynsted lane, came in for hearing. The Military Representative appealed against exemption to January 31st, which, considering the man's age, was thought unreasonable. The local tribunal themselves thought the man should be in the Army, but considered that labour on the farm was down to bed-rock, and were satisfied that if he were taken the production of the farm would be seriously reduced. They therefore granted him till January 31st with the object of allowing the substitution scheme to become operative. The father said he was aged 70, and had one son at the Front. He had bought two carts of mould, but he usually bought six. The Military Representative's appeal was allowed, the local tribunal to grant conditional exemption unless and until substituted.





Due to the heavy involvement of local regiments in the Battle of Arras and Passchendaele, the year would bring the largest loss of life from the Parish and its surrounding villages.

Battle of Arras

9 April - 16 May 1917

This battle was short but bloody, and consisted of:

Battle of Vimy Ridge	9 – 12 April
First Battle of the Scarpe	9 – 14 April
First Battle of Bullecourt	10 – 11 April
Battle of Lagnicourt	15 April
Second Battle of the Scarpe	23 – 24 April
Battle of Arleux	28 – 29 April
Third Battle of the Scarpe	3 – 4 May
Second Battle of Bullecourt	3 – 17 May

Passchendaele

31 July – 10 November 1917

Also known as the Third Battles of Ypres, it consisted of:

Battle of Pilkem Ridge	31 July – 2 August
Battle of Langemarck	16 – 18 August
Battle of the Menin Road	20 – 25 September
Battle of Polygon Wood	26 September – 3 October
Battle of Broodseinde	4 October
Battle of Poelcapelle	9 October
Second Battle of Passchendaele	26 October – 10 November





Faversham and North East Kent News 10 February 1917:

LOCAL WAR ITEMS.

Lance-Corpl. Ernest George Champion of the East Surrey Regiment, only son of Mr. E. Champion of Lynsted, has been awarded the DCM. He and a comrade put out barbed wire in No Man's Land in France, under heavy rifle and machine gun fire, and both obtained the distinction. Lance-Corporal Champion was formerly a member of Lynsted Church Choir, and was amongst the first to join up after the outbreak of War.

Faversham and North East Kent News 12 April 1917:

LOCAL WAR ITEMS.

Driver Ernest White, R.G.A., the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs W. White, of Aymers Lodge, Lynsted, has, we are pleased to learn, been granted a commission. Driver White, who has seen six months' service in France, performed a dangerous piece of duty by taking a message from his battery commander along a road that was swept by German shell fire. For this and much excellent work as observer he was recommended for a commission. Accordingly he returned to England for a course of training, and now has been gazetted 2nd-Lieutenant, R.G.A. The young officer is to be congratulated on his success. He was married recently to Miss Ella Madeline Pulford, youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs W.E. Pulford, of Stroud Green.



The Battle of Vimy Ridge

9 – 12 April 1917



Richard Jack

Canadian troops loading a QF 4.5 inch Howitzer at Vimy Ridge



**Private, 466904, 7th Canadian Infantry (1st British Columbia Regiment),
63rd Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force**

Killed in action 13 April 1917 Aged 32

The eldest child of John, a coal yard manager and Clerk to the County Council, and Elizabeth Jane (née Lovett), John was born in Sittingbourne on 14 January 1885. Some Canadian records incorrectly give John's date of birth as 14 January 1888 and age at death of 29. His early years were spent at 4 Hill House, Greenstreet (next door to The Grange), Lynsted, with his younger siblings Charles, Maude, George, Mabel and Lilian. He was admitted to Teynham School on 11 March 1890 and, on leaving, was employed as a labourer in the brickfields.

On 15 June 1907, John married Florence Emily Mount of Chartham in Lynsted Church. As with several local men, John looked abroad for employment and sailed from Liverpool on the "Laurentic" to Montreal, Quebec, on 25 June 1910. Once settled, he was joined by his wife a year later. It appears his brother, Charles, also joined them in Canada in mid 1911 but died the following year on 28 September. During Charles's younger years, Teynham School records had registered his long absence due to pneumonia. This may have been a contributing factor in his early death.

John lived at 875, 4th Street, South East Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada and worked as a labourer at the time of his enlistment on 16 July 1915. Papers show he was 30 years and 8 months old on enlistment and was described as being 5 ft 5 ins tall with a dark complexion, dark brown hair and light blue eyes. He would serve in the 63rd Battalion (Edmonton), Canadian Expeditionary Force, an infantry battalion that had recruited in Medicine Hat, Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta. John's training would have taken place at the largest military training camp on Canadian soil, Valcartia.

On 22 April 1916, the Battalion was mobilised and sailed from St John on the SS Metagama, arriving in England on 5 May. On 29 June 1916, John's Battalion was taken on to the strength of the 7th Battalion to provide reinforcements for the Canadian Corps in the field. On 30 July he left England to proceed to his unit in France, arriving on 5 August.

The Battalion was soon in action on the Somme during the battles of Flers-Courcelette (15 - 22 September) and Ancre Heights (1 October - 11 November). Perhaps after surviving these battles he can be forgiven when, on 21 December 1916, he was sentenced to 7 days Field Punishment for *"refusing to pay the sum of 8 Francs for refreshments ordered and eaten at expense of Mme Whersin"*.

On 4 February 1917 he spent a month on attachment to the 2nd Canadian Trench Mortar Battery, returning to his battalion on 3 March.

John's final battle would be that of the infamous Vimy Ridge, which took place from 9 - 12 April 1917. A heavy price was paid for this battle, the success of which was due to the meticulous planning and extensive training of the Canadian Corps, for which they became famous. The battle was the first occasion when all four divisions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force participated in a battle together and thus became a Canadian nationalistic symbol of achievement and sacrifice.



The days running up to the start were described in the Battalion's war diary:

Place	Date	Summary events and Information
Camblain L'Abbe	April 1 st 1917	Morning fair though cloudy. Battalion Church parade at 10.30. Light snowfall in pm.
	2 nd	Battalion proceeds to training grounds near Estree Cauchie for attack practice. Very windy and cold in forenoon. Battalion returns from training in afternoon. Cold.
	3 rd	Attack practice under company arrangements in am. Brigade attack rehearsal at training ground in afternoon. Heavy snowstorm at night. Cold.
	4 th	Battalion practices for attack at training grounds under company arrangements. Weather dull, raining most of the day.
Trenches (Centre sub sec)	5 th	Weather bright. Battalion relieves 1 st Canadian Infantry Battalion in Front Line of Labyrinth Sector. Relief complete by 7.15pm. Trenches are very muddy. Our artillery very active on enemy wire and trenches. No retaliation.
"	6 th	Weather bright and clear in am. Our heavy artillery very active against enemy defence system all day. Very little retaliation. One of our aeroplanes seen to come down. Raining towards night. Machine Gun fire – slight.
"	7 th	Weather – fair. Inter-company relief. Much aerial activity on both sides. Continuous bombardment of enemy trenches by our artillery throughout the night. Our scouts patrol enemy wire from 500 crater to the Snout. At 11.00pm they were fired on from enemy trenches opposite 500 crater. No attempt by enemy to repair wire was noticed.
"	8 th	Weather bright and clear during forenoon. In afternoon – considerable activity by our heavies on enemy's Batteries and rear. Our heavy artillery also bombarded enemy front line and wire for several hours. No's 1 and 4 Company come up into battle position. Continuous bombardment by our artillery. Some retaliation by enemy on our line.

The battle for Vimy Ridge started at 5.30am on Easter Monday, 9 April 1917. Major D Philpot's (Commanding 7th Canadian Infantry Battalion) report on 9 - 16 April 1916 gives an account of what was a successful battle, but at a huge cost:

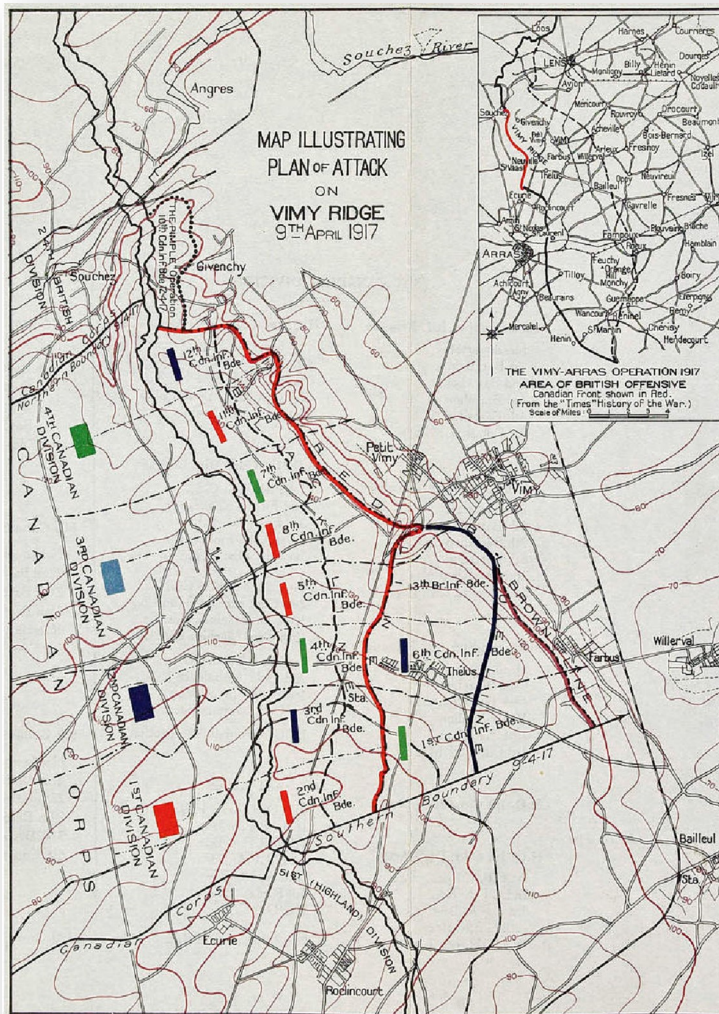
At Zero hour the barrage opened and all assaulting troops left our trenches and formed up in no-man's-land roughly along the line of the old French trench. The first wave only were formed up in their proper formation, the remaining waiting until they entered the enemy lines to adopt their formations as laid down. One enemy machine gun from rear trenches opened fire immediately our barrage started and inflicted a number of casualties on our men as they

formed, including the Company Commander (Capt C L Harris) who was killed instantly.

Immediately the barrage lifted the attacking troops followed into the German Front Line which was taken without difficulty, the companies following and opening out to their proper formations as the barrage moved forward.

The First Objective was taken without much heavy fighting, most of the enemy surrendering readily as our men reached them. They were, however, subjected to a steady rifle and machine gun fire from positions in the rear and had a number of casualties from short bursts of our own shells — this was particularly the case on the right where one of our own guns appeared to be firing short all the way to the Red Line and inflicting a large number of casualties on No 3 Coy who were on that flank and detailed to take the Red objective.

Great difficulty was found in locating the Bastion Tunnel as only one entrance to it remained open after our bombardment. The 1st Battalion followed our men very closely into the Black objective and assisted in mopping-up.



During the pause of the barrage in front of the Black objective the two companies detailed for the Red objective formed up on the barrage again advancing followed it through to their objective. They met with considerable resistance from isolated parties of the enemy in trenches and Strong Points and in many cases had to advance up trenches until bombing parties could dislodge the enemy and allow the advance to continue. This undoubtedly caused a certain amount of confusion owing to the line being broken in places but had it not been done would probably have meant that our casualties would have been so heavy that sufficient men would not have been left of the attacking parties to capture their objective.

Casualties in these two companies had been very heavy and No 1 Coy were ordered to reinforce them, their place in the Black line being taken by A Coy of the 8th Can Battalion moved up from reserve.....

..... During the afternoon of "Z"

Plan for attack on Vimy Ridge



day the Battalion were relieved from the Red line by the 8th Battalion and moved back into reserve in the old German front system. The balance of "Z" day was spent in clearing and evacuating our wounded, this being practically completed by dusk.

On April 10th (Z plus 1 day) the Battalion was employed in collecting our dead and burying them in a Battalion Cemetery which was located at map ref A.16.d.7.6. and in re-fitting and re-equipping from casualty equipment on the field and re-organising on a two section platoon basis ready for further operations if called on.

April 11th was spent in completing re-equipment and re-organisation and in salving and collecting abandoned stores, arms and equipment of both our own and enemy's troops.

On April 12th the men were rested and moved up in the late afternoon and relieved the 1st Can Inf Battalion in the Brown Line and Farbus, relief being reported complete by 1am on the 13th.

The battle for Vimy Ridge was now over, but fighting would continue as the Canadians continued to advance. There was confusion about the date of John's death, which is recorded as 14 April 1917 on the Lynsted memorial. Records show this was the original assumed date; however, it was finally confirmed as 13 April 1917.

Major Philpot's report of the day on which John died is as follows:

During the whole of the night 12th/13th our positions were heavily shelled by 4.1 and 5.9 batteries and many casualties were suffered by us. At 3.30pm 13th whilst at a Brigade Conference it was reported that the 2nd Division had gained the railway and we were ordered to send out patrols with the same objective. At 4.30pm a patrol of Battalion Scouts under Lieut Fraser had reached the railway and reported it all clear of enemy. Lieut Matthews who was at that time holding Farbus and Station Woods with his company was ordered to send out three patrols in the direction of Arleux to endeavour to gain touch with the enemy and if they got sufficiently far forward to follow the remainder of his company to support them. At the same time a party of signallers were sent out to lay a wire from Battalion HQ to Lieut Matthews Company and to follow with them and maintain communication - established and remained intact throughout the advance.

Lieut Fraser with a patrol of Battalion Scouts moved along the left flank of the Battalion advance with the object of ascertaining if the Mont Forget Quarries were occupied by the enemy. A British aeroplane was brought down by an enemy machine. Lieut Fraser got in touch with the pilot and observer (who were both uninjured) and drove back a party of about ten of the enemy, who were moving forward from the direction of Mont Forget Quarries with the object evidently of capturing the airmen, by firing on them with a Lewis Gun taken from the aeroplane. About fifty men were seen to leave the Mont Forget Quarries and retire in the direction of Arleux and were fired on by the Lewis Gun but it was not seen whether any casualties were inflicted.

At 6.30pm Lieut Matthews reported that he was level with Willerval and still advancing. I then ordered No 1 Coy under Lieut McDonald to follow and support No 2 and assist in consolidating should they be held up. At 7pm it was reported to me that the forward company were still advancing and in touch with the 8th Canadian Infantry Battalion on the right but that the 18th Can Inf Battalion on the left were digging in about 200 yards east of the railway. I requested Major Tudor commanding 5th Can Inf Battalion to send me up one company to link in between



the 18th Battalion and my forward company to form a defensive flank and this company reported to me about 8.30pm and were sent forward. At 7.40pm it was reported to me that the 8th Battalion on our right were digging in in front of Willerval and I sent instructions to my leading company to conform to their movements and consolidate the line, sending out patrols in the direction of Arleux to try and establish contact with the enemy. At 8pm I sent forward No 4 Coy under Lieut Slater to support the other companies forward of the track and to assist the company of the 5th Battalion if necessary in filling the gap on our left flank. At 8pm a small company of our Corps Cavalry rode through our left flank going NE and returned about 10 minutes later but did not send in any report to the Battalion. At 8.40pm instructions were sent out to dig in a line. As the furthest advanced company were ahead of the line they retired to the Sunken Road from Willerval to Mont Foret Quarries where good cover was available and established a main resistance line there with six posts dug-in in front. The remaining companies dug-in in rear. Battalion HQ moved down to the gun-pits in the railway near Farbus Station.

Over the period 9 - 13 April 1917 John's Battalion took heavy losses:

Strength going into battle:		Situation on 13 April
Officers	21	4 killed, 7 wounded
Other ranks	752	83 killed 8 died of wounds 320 wounded 21 missing 1 missing - believed killed 6 missing - believed wounded 9 wounded at duty

It is estimated that the Battalion took 250 prisoners, but owing to heavy Canadian casualties there were few escorts to take them away.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge had been a great success. However, of the 100,000 Canadians who took part and bore the brunt of the fighting, 3,598 were killed and 7,004 wounded. Four members of the Canadian Corps received VCs for their actions during the battle.

John was posthumously awarded both the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. [See Appendix 1]

John has no known grave but is commemorated on the magnificent Vimy Memorial, which stands on the Ridge that was so hard fought for. A 250 acre site was ceded to Canada in perpetuity by the



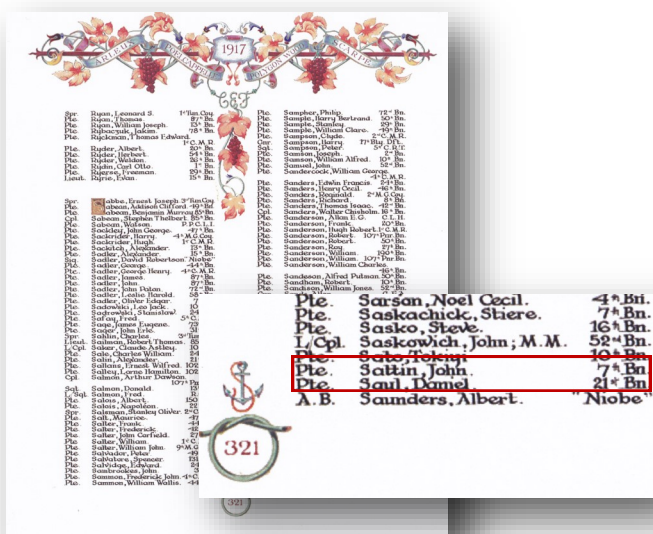
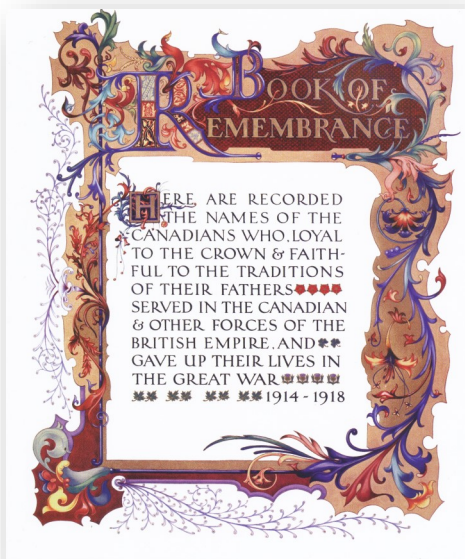
French Government for the memorial. A poignant reminder of the 11,285 Canadian soldiers killed in France who have no grave.



The Canadian National Vimy Memorial, which bears the inscription "To the valour of their countrymen in the Great War and in memory of their sixty thousand dead this monument is raised by the people of Canada".

In addition, John is remembered on page 321 of the Canadian First World War Book of Remembrance. A copy of this page has kindly been sent to us by the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Canadian House of Commons, noting that:

"A grateful nation recognises his sacrifice every year on July 13th, when this page is displayed for public viewing in the Memorial Chamber of the Parliament of Canada."





John's wife remarried after the war. His brother, George, would also serve his country in 6th Battalion, The Buffs, and survived the war. John's youngest sibling, Lillian, married in 1917 but died two years later on 6 December 1918. This was possibly from the Spanish Flu that had reached epidemic proportions at this time.





The flowers left thick at nightfall in the wood
This Eastertide call into mind the men,
Now far from home, who, with their sweethearts, should
Have gathered them and will do never again.

*Edward Thomas,
Killed on the first day of the Battle of Arras
Easter Monday, 9 April 1917*

First Battle of the Scarpe

9 – 14 April 1917





**Rifleman, 553284, 1/16th (City of London) Battalion, London Regiment,
(Queen's Westminster Rifles)**

**Formerly Rifleman, 6822, 16th (City of London) Battalion,
London Regiment, (Queen's Westminster Rifles)**

Killed in action 14 April 1917 Aged 23

James was born in 1894, the youngest of the 3 children of James and Jane (née Johnson) French of New House Farm, Greenstreet, Lynsted. James's elder siblings were Reginald and Florence Josephine. Reginald was also a casualty of the First World War, being killed in 1918 and whose life we also commemorate.

James junior worked as a labourer on his father's farm. James's father was not only a farmer and butcher but also a Justice of the Peace, in which role he was responsible for signing the conscription papers for many of the men of Lynsted and Teynham.

Sadly, James's military records are not available but we know that he enlisted in Sittingbourne and at the time of his death had served for less than a year. We know that his battalion saw action in Gommecourt, Leuze Wood, and Bouleaux Wood in 1916.

In April 1917 the 1/16th Queen's Westminster Rifles prepared for the start of the Battle of Arras. Canadian, South African, New Zealand, Newfoundland and Australian men fought alongside each other, attacking Germans on the Western Front near the city of Arras. Although the Allies made major gains on the first day, stalemate followed. The battle cost nearly 160,000 British and about 125,000 German casualties.

The war diary for James's regiment, written in the field by Lieut Colonel R Shoolbred, has survived and comprehensively details the less than ideal way James's battalion was prepared for battle:

Date	Summary events and Information
April 1 st 1917	During the day work was continued on the trenches held by us. In the evening the Battalion was relieved by the Rangers of the 168th Infantry Brigade. Relief started at about 8pm and was completed at 1am. During the day hostile artillery was fairly quiet but during the night our front and support lines were shelled. Our relief was completed without any casualties, the Rangers, however, being less fortunate. Companies proceeded by march route to Monchiet, a distance of about 10 miles. Casualties 6 OR Sick, 2 OR Reinforcements.
2 nd	Battalion "all in" by 5.30am. Day of rest and cleaning up. Casualties 1 OR Sick.
3 rd	Another day of rest and cleaning. During the afternoon the Divisional Band played in the village and the Battalion was also allotted 400 seats at the "Bow Bells". Casualties 2 OR Reinforcements.
4 th	Training was carried out during the day. The new Platoon formation, bayonet fighting and rapid loading was especially practised. Casualties 1 OR Sick. Other causes, 1 OR Reinforcement.



Date	Summary events and Information
5 th April	Training still carried on in Battalion area, new formations etc still being practised. O.O. No.85 issued at 5pm. Casualties 12 OR Sick. 1 Officer (Major PM Glasier) and 1 OR Reinforcement.
6 th	Training still carried on. In the afternoon special attention was given to Artillery Formation. Orders for the move to Achicourt postponed 1 day. Administrative Orders in conjunction with O.O. No.85 for Z Day were issued. Casualties 3 OR Wounded (Ammunition Loading Party). 14 OR Sick.
7 th	In the evening the Battalion marched to Billets in Achicourt. The same areas were occupied as on March 25th. Casualties 13 OR Sick, 1 OR Other Causes, 21 Reinforcements (serving with T.M.B.)
8 th	At about 1am a few shells were fired into Achicourt with the result that a barn adjoining one of the "A" Company billets caught fire. "A" Company turned out immediately and their efforts prevented the fire from spreading. At about noon the town was again shelled. "B" Company H.Q. received a direct hit, causing part of the building to collapse, thereby inflicting many casualties on a Platoon of men of this Company who were taking shelter in the building. The shelling ceased at about 1pm, but started again at 2pm. This time a lorry loaded with 9.2" ammunition was hit and immediately burst into flames. The fire spread to adjacent lorries, until in all there were twenty burning. After a time the ammunition began to explode and some of the houses in the Square began to blaze. A great deal of damage was caused by this fire, many billets being burned and a large quantity of stores and equipment buried beneath the ruins. At 8.15pm the Battalion moved up from Achicourt to the Reserve Area, West of Beaurains. Battalion "all in" by midnight. Casualties 1 Officer (2nd Lieut A.G. Beville) and 16 OR Killed, 31 OR Wounded
9 th	Zero Day. Orders to be prepared to move forward from Zero plus 2 hours. No orders for move received. Casualties Nil.
10 th	Battalion still in Reserve Area. In the evening a wire was received stating that the Division had gained its objective. All Units to reform. But this information as to the objective having been gained turned out not to be true. Casualties 1 OR Other Causes, 2 OR Reinforcements.
11 th	Orders to move were received by phone at 2.30pm. The Battalion moved up to the Area in N.14.c—ENE of Neuville Vitasse, in trenches which were supposed to be the Hindenburg Line. Battalion HQ in German dug-out in Telegraph Lane. Casualties 1 OR Sick, 1 OR Reinforcement.
12 th	In the afternoon orders were received to move South to the Area occupied by the 2nd Londons. While this move was in progress, cancelling orders were received and later, the Regiment was ordered to send three Companies up to the Nepal Trench in N.21.d. with One Company in support in N.20.b. "A", "B", and "D" Companies moved forward, while "C" Company who were shifting a dump remained in support. This move was not completed until the early hours of the 13th April. Casualties 4 OR Sick, 1 Officer (2nd Lieut H.J. Furminger) Transferred to "Tanks".



Date	Summary events and Information
April 13 th	<p>Neither the Division on our left or on our right did get on this day and the attack was not delivered and at night we relieved the L.R Cont.B. on the Left of Wancourt Tower Ridge and the Victorias relieved the 2nd Londons on the Right. This afternoon the Division on our left attacked Guemappe which was heavily shelled by both the enemy and ourselves and the position in it was very obscure.</p> <p>At 10pm a Warning Order came in that the attack as detailed at the beginning of the day—April 13th—was to be carried out on the following morning and at 11.45pm the final orders were received ordering the attack at 5.30am the following morning—the Victorias attacking on the right and the Westminster on the left, and no longer making our attack dependent on what happened on our left or right, but making it an independent and apparently isolated attack.</p> <p>The men were also entirely whacked and there was no time or possibility of any proper explanation to them of their objectives—or of more than the mere organization of the advance to the attack and the objective, which no one had ever seen.</p> <p>These objectives were firstly the establishing of a position along the ridge some 500 yards West of Cherisy—a ridge running NE & SW and parallel to 1,000 yards from the Tower Ridge on which we were established. And, secondly, the capture and consolidation of the village of Cherisy itself and the establishment of strong points on the northern flank of our attack and of outposts along the line of the Sensee River to the East of the village.</p> <p>The first objective was the task of “A” and “B” Companies—“A” on the right and “B” on the Left.</p> <p>The second objective was the task of “C” and “D” Companies—“C” on the right and “D” on the Left.</p> <p>After about 1 hours sleep in the 24 for the last three days the Battalion proceeded to its task. The enemy was known to be digging in on the ridge West of Cherisy some 1,000 yards in front of the Wancourt Tower Ridge and parallel to it, but the strength of his artillery or of his dispositions for defence were entirely unknown, though during the last few days he had been shewing a much stronger resistance than at any period since the beginning of his withdrawal from the Corps front.</p>

James died during the fighting of the following day, the final day of the First Battle of the Scarpe. Again, Lt Colonel Shoolbred reports the details:

At Zero Hour—5.30am—the Battalion advanced to the attack.

“A” and “B” Companies forming the first wave—“A” on the Right and “B” on the Left.

“C” and “D” Companies forming the second wave—“C” on the Right and “D” on the Left.

Each wave advancing in two lines of men extended at 6 paces interval and at 200 yards



distance. The distance between the first wave last line and the first line of the 2nd wave was 300 yards in order to conform to the advance of the Victorias on our Right. It was a beautiful morning and quite light with the remains of the moon to help the dawning day. It appears that the enemy were launching an attack against the Wancourt Tower, which was our left flank, at the same time as our attack was taking place, as the enemy barrage started a few minutes before Zero Hour and before our own barrage commenced. Our own barrage is described by our attacking waves as seeming to be negligible as compared with the enemy. It certainly did not keep the Machine Gunners heads down or stop their fire.

The Battalion went into action 497 all ranks.

"A" Company with Capt. H. Agate in command. 2nd Lieuts W. Hull, H. Pickles, and R.I. Richens.

"B" Company with Lieut S.C. Yeates in command. 2nd Lieuts J. Betteridge and T.S. Baker.

"C" Company with Lieut W.G. Orr in command. 2nd Lieuts B.C. Lewall, W.M. Musgrove and C.A. English.

"D" Company with 2nd Lieut P. Palmer in command. 2nd Lieuts S.E. Trotter, V. Bell and C.K. Gray.

Headquarters followed the last line of "C" and "D" Companies and established itself just under the crest of the hill at about 6am.

Information was at this time brought back by Sergt Hawkins of "C" Company that some enemy were quite close and it appears that as soon as the front waves had gone over the ridge and were descending into the valley between us and the ridge, which formed the first objective, a number of the enemy appeared in their left rear.

Heavy Machine Gun fire was also opened from front and from both flanks and the advance was held up—the casualties from Machine Gun fire being severe. It was this Machine Gun Fire and not the enemy barrage which caused nearly all our casualties.

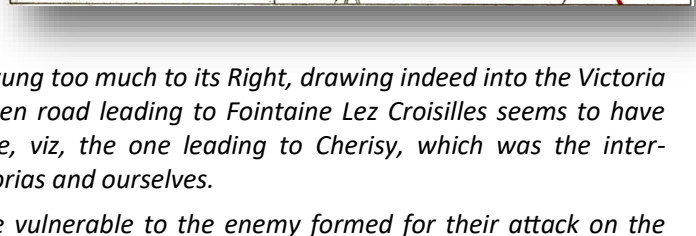
At shortly before 6.30am two Companies of the L.R.B. were sent up, one to line the trench out of which our first wave had gone and the other to form a defensive flank by the river. At about 9am a formed body of the enemy were seen some 200 yards on their side of the Tower Ridge moving to the SW to a position about half way between the Tower and the junction of the tracks in 29.d.8.9. They were about 50 strong and looked remarkably like the front wave of a counter attack, but they contented themselves with some sniping which the L.R.B. replied to and I did not turn the artillery on to them because of the numbers of our wounded, who I feared were in their neighbourhood, neither in view of the obscurity of the position in our front did I attack them with the bayonet.

It appears that our lines advanced keeping touch with the Victorias on our Right across the enemy practice trenches on our side of the valley over which the attack was advancing and that the few remaining Officers and Men of the two front Companies established themselves in the furthest of these trenches, the two rear Companies in one of the nearer of them.

They were no longer in sufficient strength to press the attack any further and were under heavy Machine Gun fire as well as enemy shell fire, but it was the Machine Gun fire which caused nearly all the casualties.

Quite early in the morning Capt. H. Agate was wounded and Lieut S.C. Yeates and 2nd Lieut T.S. Baker were killed, 2nd Lieut R.I. Richens mortally wounded and at different times 2nd Lieuts Betteridge and Pickles were wounded leaving in these two Companies - "A" and "B" -

This rendered our left all the more vulnerable to the enemy formed for their attack on the





Wancourt Tower position.

Furthermore, our left was, from the initial plan of the attack, entirely in the air, there being no attack made between Guemappe and the left of our Brigade objectives, this ground being the reverse slope of a hill ending at the East end of the Wancourt Tower Spur. At the last Minute and while on the trek to some other destination the ———- Brigade were diverted and ordered to fill in this gap and establish a defensive flank from Cherisy to Guemappe, but coming up in the dark and with no previous reconnaissance at all they got too much to the Right—deployed for their advance in the middle of our assembly area and eventually crossing the line of our advance by a further diagonal half right advance came into support of the Victorias on our right instead of being on our left, and being held up on the Tower Ridge, established themselves there where they remained all day.

There was no communication from the front, and knowing how close a formed body of the enemy were to the Tower Ridge, I had no hope of establishing any from the rear, except that 2nd Lieut A.M. Mackle went out in the early afternoon to collect all the men he could find in our near front so that the remains of the Battalion could be reassembled as ordered by Brigade in our morning assembly area. In this way some 65 OR were collected. At this time we had no knowledge of the men of "C" Company and oddments who were maintaining themselves in the German practice trench (alluded to above).

At 5pm an order was received from Brigade that Battalion HQ was to move to and re-establish itself in the HQ in Wancourt which we had occupied the previous night and 2nd Lieut A.M. Mackle was left on the ridge to collect stragglers and wounded from the field at dusk, and misinterpreting his orders, as he failed to distinguish between stragglers and a formed body, however small, holding a position won in battle. 2nd Lieut A.M. Mackle instructed to withdraw to the assembly area. Owing to the unfortunate withdrawal of Battalion HQ it was 9 o'clock at night before I heard of Lieut Orr's position and of his having withdrawn from it. After consultation with Brigade Lieut Orr was ordered to re-establish himself in the post he had occupied and informed that he would be relieved by the 4th Londons of the 168th Brigade who were taking over the line and for whom he was instructed to leave guides. He left 2nd Lieut S.A. English and three other guides who knew perfectly well what they had to do and where they had to go, but who, on account of the darkness of the night, failed when guiding the platoon to find the position. Lieut Orr having only 15 men with him—his original 27 less oddments of other Regiments and less the guides for the relieving platoon of the 4th London Regiment, and having had no orders to hold the position at all costs, and estimating his force as insufficient to be able to hold the position in the face of any attack during the day, withdrew his men at dawn, judging himself just before dawn to be practically surrounded by the enemy, whose Very Lights were crossing over his trench from both front and back. A withdrawal for which, wrong or right, I accept full responsibility.

Lieut Orr had behaved with the greatest gallantry and resource all day and owing to the failure of communication was placed in a position of extreme difficulty in making his final decision. As a matter of fact the enemy never did occupy the trench he withdrew from and the following night the London Scottish re-established themselves in it without any fighting or casualties. But this whole incident is another instance shewing the importance of Battalion Headquarter not being moved from its Battle position until for good or for ill the position in front is definitely and fully cleared up.



The Battalion came out of action that night to the Neuville Vitasse Area.

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>OR</u>
"A" Company	1	23
"B" Company	-	40
"C" Company	2	42
"D" Company	-	50
<u>Total</u>	3	165
<u>Headquarter "Details"</u>	4	53
<u>Total</u>	7	218

Casualties—13th—2 OR Killed 11 OR Wounded

Casualties—14th—2 Officers Killed (Lieut S.C. Yeates and 2nd Lieut T.S. Baker) and 11 OR Killed. 5 Officers (2nd Lieuts S.E. Trotter, B.C. Lewall, J. Betteridge, P. Palmer and V. Bell) and 143 OR Wounded. 3 Officers (Capt H. Agate, 2nd Lieuts C.K. Gray and H. Pickles) and 96 OR Missing. 1 OR Reinforcement.

15th At noon the Battalion paraded for "Roll Call" after which the Companies were amalgamated, "A" and "B" Companies forming No. 1 Company and "C" and "D" Companies No.2 . At 3.30pm the Battalion again paraded and marched back to trenches in the old German front line 500 yards South of Beaurains. The Battalion now being so small in numbers all the men were able to find accommodation in cleared German Dug-outs and shelters erected by the 167th Infantry Brigade.

Casualties 2 Officers Died of Wounds (2nd Lieut R.I. Richens and 2nd Lieut W.M. Musgrove) and 1 OR Died of Wounds. 2 OR Other Causes.

Sadly James was one of the "other ranks" posted as missing on 14 April. A year later, on 9 March 1918, the Faversham and North East Kent News carried the following article:

MISSING MEN

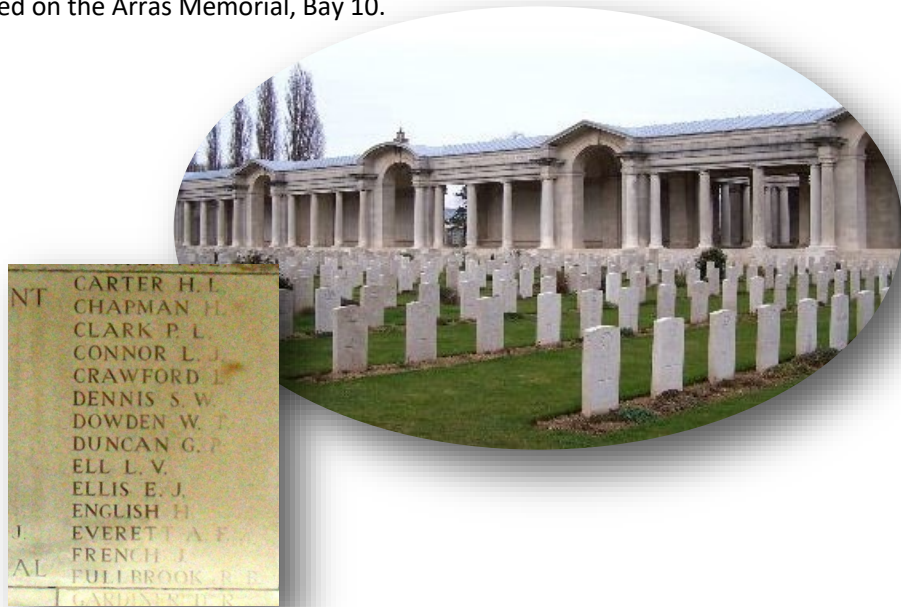
No tidings have yet been received of Pte. James French, of Queen's Westminster Rifles, younger son of Mr and Mrs James French, of Greenstreet. He was reported missing nearly a year ago. The family have not altogether given up hope that something may yet be heard of him, though the War Office think there is little chance after the time that has elapsed.

Two months later, on 17 May 1918, probate was granted accepting that James was presumed "killed in action" on 14 April 1917.

James was posthumously awarded both the British War and the Victory medals. [See Appendix 1]



James is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Bay 10.



In June 1918, James's father received his money owed, which amounted to £4 14s 9d (£4.74p). In October 1919 he also received the War Gratuity of £3. [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £446 in today's money.

Less than 3 months after the confirmation of James's death, on 3 August 1918, the Faversham and North East Kent News reported that James's older brother, Reginald, who was serving in the Australian Forces in France, had been reported missing since 14 June 1918. He too would later be confirmed as killed in action and is commemorated in this book.







3 - 4 May 1917

Thursday 3 May 1917 saw the heaviest casualties for Lynsted, when 5 men were lost at the Third Battle of the Scarpe in one day. The stories of the next 6 men follow similar paths. Amos Brown and Reginald Weaver both served in 6th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Stanley Cleaver and MacDonald Dixon served in both the Royal East Kent Yeomanry (The Duke of Connaught's Own) (Mounted Rifles) and 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

William Gambrill served in both Royal East Kent Yeomanry (The Duke of Connaught's Own) (Mounted Rifles) and the Household Battalion, Household Cavalry and Cavalry of the Line, alongside Henry Carrier, who was lost 8 days later on 11 May 1917.



*Standing, from left: Albert Ruck, Cliff Randall, **Amos John Brown** (see opposite), William Gates*

Seated, from left: Stanley Ruck and Mr Neaves

c1913

Private, G/13126, 6th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

Killed in action 3 May 1917 Aged 35

Born in Lynsted in the second quarter of 1882 and christened on 7 June 1882 in Teynham Church, Amos was the son of James Edward Brown, a brickfield labourer, and Emily Brown (née Jarrett). Both parents came from Teynham but lived in 8 Albion Place, Greenstreet, Lynsted. Amos had two older siblings, George and Annie (who predeceased Amos in 1916), and six younger siblings, Laura, Emily, Mildred, James, Harry and Charles.

At the time of his enlistment in Sittingbourne, on 29 February 1916, Amos was nearing 34 years of age and working as a chalk quarryman. Unusually for the time, Amos was 5 feet 11½ inches tall, well above the average height for the time.

Having been placed in the Army Reserve from 1 March 1916, Amos was mobilised on 21 August 1916 as Private, 4/5178, 3/4th (Reserve) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). On 3 September 1916 he was transferred to the 4th (Reserve) Battalion of The Buffs. His service records show that he sailed for France on 30 December 1916 and was recorded as being in the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion, The Buffs. On arrival in France on 31 December

1916, Amos was stationed in Étaples, the largest British military base on foreign soil, as part of the 6th (Service) Battalion in which he would remain for his short service. He was now Private G/13126.



View eastward from Albion Place (right), Greenstreet in the 1900s.

From this point Amos's story coincides with that of our next casualty, Reginald Douglas Weaver (see following pages).

Amos and Reginald served alongside each other in the same Battalion and died on the same day.





Private, G/13599, 6th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

Killed in action 3 May 1917 Aged 23

The youngest of the five children of Charles and Alice Ann (née Tree), Reginald's elder siblings were Beatrice, Frank, James and Lily. Both Beatrice and Lily predeceased Reginald. Lily married William Charles Drayson, who is also commemorated in this book

Born in 1894 in Hollingbourne, Reginald moved around Kent during his formative years. The 1901 Census put him in Woodnesborough, Kent, and the 1911 Census with his parents in Crows Camp, Bishopsbourne, where he was working as a farm labourer. At the time of enlistment in 1915 he was living in Greenstreet, Lynsted, and working as a sawyer. His parents were then living and working at Lynsted Court.

On 26 April 1915, Reginald enlisted in the Territorial Force in 2/4th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) in Sittingbourne. He was just 21 years old and, unusually for the time, stood 5 foot 10½ inches tall. Just over a year later, on his recruitment into the regular army on 7 September 1916, Reginald had reached the height of 6 feet 1 inch.

Now Private 3331, Reginald would transfer to both the 4th and then the 3rd (Reserve) Battalions of his regiment before being posted to France on 29 December 1916, and arriving at the Infantry Base Depot at Étaples, Pas de Calais, France on 30 December 1916. He was transferred to the 6th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) on 16 January 1917, now Private G/13599, where he would remain for the rest of his short service.

Amos John Brown (see preceding page) and Reginald's stories now converge.

The winter of 1916/17 was notoriously hard, with heavy snowfall and hard frosts making conditions extremely unpleasant. The beginning of January 1917 saw Amos and Reginald's battalion training before leaving by bus towards Arras. In the period to the end of March 1917 the Battalion moved between billets in Montenescourt, Noyelette, Agnez Duisins and Lattre St Quentin, all west of Arras. Time was also spent at Givenchy le Noble, where they were given special training in practice trenches. On 10 March, the Battalion headed to Arras, which was under considerable enemy bombardment.

In preparation for Sir Douglas Haig's Spring Offensive, there was much work being undertaken to enlarge and dig new caves which would provide cover for thousands of massing troops and for the people of the town to take refuge. Electric lights were installed and the caves linked by tunnels to the front line.

On 5 April, the Battalion launched the most prolonged and furious bombardment on the enemy trenches - the largest bombardment so far of the war. The Battalion's War Diary for 9 April 1917, ominously starts "Zero Day" and was the first day of The Battle of Arras, and, in this case, the First Battle of the Scarpe.



The War Diary has been referenced by Colonel R S H Moody in his "Historical Records of The Buffs East Kent Regiment 1914-1919", an extract of which is documented below:

The Brigade was all formed up in the reserve trenches by 3.30am. The 6th Queen's were in first line on the right and the 7th East Surrey on the left. The 13th Liverpool Regiment of the division was on the right of the Queen's, who had The Buffs in support; while the 6th Royal West Kent supported the East Surreys. At 5.30am, the zero hour, the guns opened an intensive fire on the German Lines and at the same time the whole moved forward to the attack in artillery formation. The Buffs had C Company on the right and D on the left, with A, plus one and a half platoons of B, as the right support, and the remainder of B left support. After passing through the Queen's the first objective (Black Line) was reached and quickly captured by The Buffs, without much loss. A two hours' bombardment of the enemy's second system of trenches (Blue Line) followed, and then the barrage lifted and the advance was resumed. More opposition was now encountered, snipers and machine guns being active in both flanks. After stiff hand-to-hand fighting D Company was able to get round the flank and, by overcoming concealed machine guns, which the enemy had pushed forward into shell holes, reached and captured the point on the Blue Line which was its objective. C Company on the right was troubled by enfilade machine-gun fire operating on its right flank from the ruins of Estaminet Corner. By means of Lewis-gun fire and rifle grenading, however, these were eventually silenced and the company enabled to proceed. The Blue Line was consolidated, Lewis guns pushed forward and strong points dug. By 2.18pm the 35th Brigade came up, passed through the 37th and pushed on to the final objective. The whole attack made on this day was entirely successful, even more so than expected. Great numbers of prisoners, machine guns, field guns and material fell to The Buffs. All objectives were seized and consolidated and advance parties sent forward. By the afternoon no enemy was to be found except dead or prisoners in the "cages" or wired-in enclosure erected for the captured. On the 10th the cavalry went through and reached Monchy le Preux, where the battalion followed that night, having lost during the first Battle of the Scarpe 2nd Lieuts R G K Money and T W Buss and 23 men killed; Captain Gordon, 2nd Lieuts Wilks, Good, Figgis, Thornley, Squire and Baldwin, and 149 men wounded and 18 missing.

The next few days saw little relief. The Buffs were eventually relieved on 11 April and spent the day clearing up the battlefield, forming tool dumps and burying the dead. The news came that they would relieve the 37th Division but, due to white-out conditions, could not move. Relief came at nightfall the next day and they marched back to Arras. After a short rest they marched to billets at Montenescourt, accompanied by their band playing the regimental march. The last two weeks of Amos and Reginald's lives were spent marching between billets and undertaking more training in torrential rain.

The Third Battle of the Scarpe would be Amos and Reginald's next - and last - time at the front. In the very early hours of 2 May, their Battalion had completed the relief of the 7th Norfolks at Monchy. After dark that day, the 7th Battalion East Surreys took over the trenches occupied by the Battalion, who moved forward into position in shell holes. Orders arrived for a general attack the following morning with the objectives of taking Devils Trench and Keeling Copse. Zero hour was set for 3.45am.

The War Diary Report details Amos and Reginald's Battalion's actions on 3 May:

Monchy - 3rd May

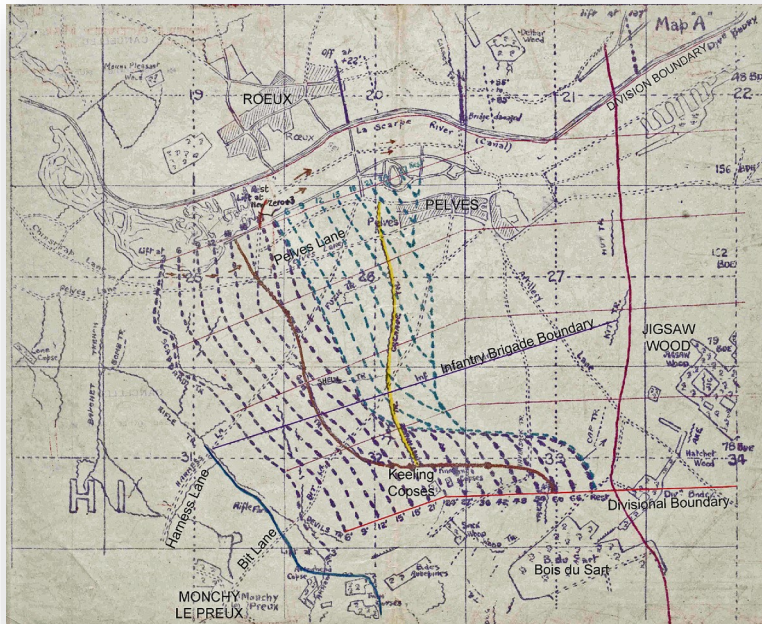
At Zero hour an intense barrage opened up and a creeping barrage opened at a rate of 100 yds per 3 mins. The Battalion went over at the same time. The Signal Officer, 2nd Lieut McCaulay with 2 Signallers and 4 Orderlies went forward to establish an Advanced Battalion Headquarters in Devils Trench. No communication being possible, they returned at about 4.30pm. Two prisoners had already been sent down and apparently the Battalion had gone forward but in the darkness it was impossible to ascertain anything definite. Owing to sniper and Lewis Gun fire it was difficult to obtain any information as to how events were proceeding during the day.

Acting Captain McDermott and Acting Captain Kitchin became casualties early in the day (the latter dying of wounds the following day). During the day except for continuous sniping and sudden bursts of artillery fire it was fairly quiet. A hostile aeroplane was brought down by our Lewis Gun fire in the afternoon. At dusk it was ascertained that the Battalion had suffered severe casualties amongst Officers and Other Ranks and that the line held was practically as before.

2nd Lieuts Seago and Sowter were sent for from the details camp and arrived about 10.00pm. These officers were sent forward to reorganise what remained of the Battalion.

The attack in the flanks was unsuccessful and it was afterwards found that 2 officers - 2/Lts Cocherane and Gunter with about 40 men had worked forward in the dark and had established themselves in a position North East of Keeling Copse with a Lewis Gun.

They were able to account for a considerable number of Germans. After dark having expended every cartridge and bomb they possessed, they cut their way back through 3 lines of German trenches. The 2 Officers with 13 men returned finally to Battalion Headquarters.



Brigade disposition map 1-3 May 1917



Amos John BROWN / Reginald Douglas WEAVER

The following casualties were sustained during these operations:

2/Lt Williams H W	Wounded	Lieut (Acting Captain) McDermott WK	Wounded
2/Lt Warmington C	Missing	2/Lieut Nesbit C H F	Wounded
2/Lt Kirkpatrick A	Missing	2/Lieut Grant A E	Missing
2/Lt Dinsmore J H	Killed in action	2/Lieut James K L	Missing
Lt (Acting Captain) Kitchin J B	Wounded (since died)	2/Lieut Willis J H S	Missing
2/Lt Evans H W	Missing	2/Lieut King E A	Missing
2/Lt Forster R L F	Missing	2/Lieut Hardy-Mason H V	Killed in action

With 360 Other Ranks

A further attack by the 6th Royal West Kent Regiment was made at 9.45pm to establish posts west of Keeling Copse.

This attack did not succeed.

What remained of the Battalion was relieved by 2.00am the following morning. The surviving members of the battalion who were not wounded retired to Arras to rest for just 2 days before returning to the trenches for a further ten days and relieved on 17 May.

The Battalion suffered at least 376 casualties, the combination of killed, wounded and missing on 3 May. Initially 207 men were reported as missing; many were later found to have lost their lives.

Amos and Reginald were among those initially posted as missing. Almost a year later, on 3 April 1918, it was made official that it was assumed they died "on or after" 3 May 1917. Their service in France had lasted 123 days.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records 131 men of the battalion eventually confirmed as having lost their lives on 3 May 1917. Of those lost, only 6 have known graves. The others, including Amos and Reginald, are all listed together on Bay 2 of the Arras Memorial.

Amos and Reginald were both posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1]



Amos's mother received his money owed in October 1918. This amounted to £4 4s 0d (£4.20p). In October 1919 she also received his War Gratuity of £3. [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £415 in today's money.

Reginald's father received £5 5s 11d (£5.29½p) in owed pay in May 1918. Also his war gratuity of £8 10s 0d (£8.50p) in October 1919. Taken together these amount to roughly £760 in today's money.

Reginald is also commemorated on the Hollingbourne War Memorial, the village of his birth, and on their Roll of Honour in All Saints Church.





MacDonald Dixon (see opposite)



**Private, G/15821, Attached to 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
from the Royal East Kent Yeomanry (The Duke of Connaught's Own) (Mounted Rifles)**

Killed in action 3 May 1917 Aged 31

Born at Cambridge Farm, Cambridge Lane, Lynsted in early 1886, MacDonald was the youngest child of William Roper Dixon JP, a farmer and employer, originally from Blackfriars, and Sarah Agnes Dixon (née Gillow), originally from Ospringe. His elder siblings were Bridges Richard¹, Roper Gillow², Mary³ and Frederick⁴. Both Mary and Frederick predeceased MacDonald.

Between 1881 and 1911 the Dixons employed a number of local people as companions, housemaids and cooks. These included Beatrice Norman, Mary Lewis, Fanny Barnet Crean, Louise Jane Bure, Edith Nankevell, Alexander Nichols, Annie Alice Nichols, Emma Kite and Emma Milliner.

Just before the outbreak of war, in July 1914, MacDonald, who was employed as a land agents clerk, married Belinda Minter at Goodnestone Church. The marriage was reported in the South Eastern Gazette on 3 October 1914:

LYNSTED - WEDDING of Mr. M. DIXON.

The wedding took place on Thursday last week, at Goodnestone Church, near Faversham, of Belinda (Queenie) Minter, only daughter of Mr and Mrs T. Minter, of Langdon Court, Faversham, and Mr MacDonald Dixon, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. W Roper Dixon, of Cambridge, Lynsted. The church was beautifully decorated for the occasion, and the Rev. W. Waite, vicar of the parish, officiated. The choir was in attendance, Miss Jessie Minter, cousin of the bride, being at the harmonium. The bride wore a dress of cream Carmeuse trimmed with lace and orange blossom, and a veil of Honiton lace which was lent by the bridegroom's mother. The bride wore a gold watch bracelet, and she carried a bouquet of white roses and lilies of the valley, the gifts of the bridegroom. The bridesmaids were the Misses Miles and Clinch, and they wore dresses of grey satin and cloaks lined with primrose satin, with striped velvet hats to match. They also wore gold safety pins, and carried bouquets of yellow chrysanthemums, the gifts of the bridegroom. Mr Murton Minter, brother of the bride, acted as "best man". After the ceremony a reception was held at the residence of the bride's parent, and subsequently the newly married couple left by motor en-route for Eastbourne, where the honeymoon is being spent. They were the recipients of over a hundred presents.

¹ Bridges Richard Dixon was born in 1875 and christened in Teynham Church on 21 October. Banns for his marriage to Janet Isabella Stewart Wood of Tonge were read at Lynsted Church before their marriage in Milton Church in 1903. They had 3 children before Bridges was widowed in early 1920. Bridges died aged 62 and was buried in Teynham Churchyard on 22 November 1937.

² Roger Gillow Dixon was born in 1874 and died in 1948 at the age of 72. He was buried in Teynham Churchyard on 11 September 1948.

³ Mary Dixon was born in 1887 and was christened in Teynham Church on 8 October. She died aged 24 and was buried in Teynham Churchyard on 22 December 1911.

⁴ Frederick Dixon was born in 1882 and christened on 22 June. He died in 1894 aged 12.



MacDonald and Belinda started their married life in Gazes Hill, Sittingbourne, and in 1916 a baby daughter, Margaret Roper, arrived.

MacDonald's service records are not available, but we know that he enlisted in Sittingbourne in February 1916, originally in the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles, but then attached to 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

The background of the months prior to his death coincide with that of Stanley Monckton Cleaver. Stanley served alongside MacDonald in both the Royal East Kent Yeomanry and 7th Buffs and they lost their lives on the same day. (See following pages)

Stanley Monckton CLEAVER

**Private, G/13193, 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
Formerly Private, 2076, 2/1st the Royal East Kent Yeomanry (The Duke of
Connaught's Own) (Mounted Rifles)**

Died of wounds 3 May 1917 Aged 21

Stanley was born in Marden in 1895 and was christened there on 13 October 1895. He was the third of the four children of farm bailiff Robert and his wife Edith Mary (née Locks), his two older siblings were William Robert (who also served in WW1 in the Army Service Corps, Motor Transport) and Marjorie Edith, the latter of whom appears to have lived with her aunt and uncle, and a younger brother, Roy Barling. Roy would join the Royal Air Force in 1931 and serve in WW2, rising to the rank of Wing Commander.

By the early 1900s the family had moved to Shoesmith Farm, Frant. In 1904, they moved further afield to Rose Cottage on Darland Farm in Pear Tree Lane, Gillingham. Stanley and older brother William were enrolled in Luton (Chatham) Council School on 24 October 1904. By 1911, the family had moved to 8 Lynsted Lane, Lynsted. Stanley, then aged 15, was recorded as lodging at Ivy Cottage, Groombridge Place, near Tunbridge Wells with the family of a coachman. Stanley was employed as a "houseboy domestic". Some time after the 1911 Census, Stanley joined his family in Lynsted Lane and took up employment as a baker for the Sittingbourne Co-operative Society.

On 28 September 1914, in Sittingbourne, Stanley enlisted into the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles for the duration of the war at age 19 years 2 months. His enlistment was reported in the South Eastern Gazette on 3 October 1914:

ROYAL EAST KENT MOUNTED RIFLES.

THE NEW RESERVE REGIMENT.

About three weeks ago the authorities decided to form a Reserve Regiment of the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles. The old regiment, having been embodied at the outbreak of the European War, is now rapidly becoming fit to undertake foreign service, for which it will no doubt be detailed. Mr. Alured Faunce de Laune, of Sharsted, Sittingbourne, made himself responsible for raising a squadron of the Reserve Regiment, and at once commenced active recruiting. On September 19th, 41 recruits joined the new regiment, and on the following Monday Mr. De Laune himself was commissioned and appointed to a command in the regiment. Since then the recruiting has been in the hands of the Hon. Secretary of the Local Recruiting Sub-Committee, and on Monday last 39 more young men presented themselves for examination at the Drill Hall, Sittingbourne, when an officer of the regiment was present. Of these 39 no less than 33 were accepted after the medical examination, and two others joined other branches of the service. Only four failed to pass the medical tests. Most of these young



men joined the regiment at Strode Park, Herne, the same evening.

Below will be found the names of those who have already joined the regiment from this district:

Bapchild:- A.T. Gammon, C.C. Neeves, G.A. Wiles, and C.N. Yates.

Bobbing, Borden, and Key Street:- B. Dutnall, A E Hollis, H. Luckhurst, G.T. Payne, A.E. Pearson, and H.M. Tyman.

Greenstreet, Lynsted, and Teynham:- C. Barton, S.G. Clarke, H.S. Clarke, **S. Cleaver**, T. Holden, J.F. Laker, T.A. Ottaway, J. Ray, H.J. Read, G.L. Sattin, and H. Wildish.

Lower Halstow – Jack Beswick

Newington: S. Clout.

Sittingbourne: E. Back, A. Bolton, E. Bourne, LF Bowes, W. Burley, A. Castle, J. Chapel, H. Ealden, W.L. Foord, HH Martin, D.R. Mears, B. Mills, H. Mills, W. Moore, C. Mountain, J. Pittock, F. Rose, H. Shipp, H. Stedman, and H. Williams.

Recruiting is still proceeding and suitable young men are asked to give in their names to Mr. F.J. Parrett at 17 High street, Sittingbourne, and arrangements will be made for their enlistment providing they pass the medical examination. Already several names have been put down to form the third batch.

Stanley remained close to home during his first few months of service, receiving his typhoid inoculations in March 1915. On 28 May 1915, at an army medical in Maresfield, Sussex, he was assessed as suitable for overseas service. A bout of tonsillitis and laryngitis saw Stanley being hospitalised for 4 days in Canterbury in January 1916.

Stanley was re-examined on 12 September 1916, and again found fit for foreign service. On 21 September 1916 he sailed for France and on 22 September arrived at the 38th Infantry Base Depot, Étaples, where he was transferred into the 4th (Territorial Force) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). It is recorded that on transfer he retained his Yeomanry rate of pay, presumably a higher rate.

On 6 November 1916, Stanley was posted to the 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), and joined his new Battalion along with 39 others at Warloy on 11 November.

It is from here the service of Stanley (see preceding record) and MacDonald Dixon coincides and they share the story.



November 1916 saw the 7th (Service) Battalion of the Buffs preparing for a move to Albert, ready to move into trenches for what was to become known as the Battle of the Ancre. The River Ancre is a tributary of the Somme and was the scene of the final large British attack in the Battle of the Somme. This battle had started with a seven-day preliminary bombardment, which was twice as heavy as that preceding the start of the first Battle of the Somme on 1 July 1916.

On the morning of 17 November, Stanley and MacDonald's Battalion received orders that would take them into the trenches for the first time. The early hours of the last day of the Battle of the Somme (18 November) were bitterly cold and the first winter snow began to fall on saturated and muddy ground. The battalion took up attack positions with the aim of capturing Desiré Trench.

The following report, written just hours after the events of 18 and 19 November by Major Mitford Montefiore Brice, illustrates the situation Stanley and MacDonald faced:

"At 6.10am our shrapnel barrage opened and the waves began to move forward, touch between the left of the 7th Royal West Kent Regiment (RWKR) and right of the 7th Buffs being excellent. A number of our shells on the immediate right of the 7th Buffs were short and the officer and platoon sergeant, right platoon, were wounded. The Officer continued to advance till wounded later.

At 6.12am the enemy barrage commenced on Regina Trench, being extremely accurate near the Advanced Headquarters dugout and at 6.14am some hostile rifle fire commenced.

The barrage on Regina Trench continued, being extremely heavy near its junction with Sixteen Street, and by 6.45am had become intense. No news had been received from the assaulting companies, although special runners had been detailed in both companies to return immediately on reaching objective. At 7.20am therefore two runners were sent forward from Advanced Headquarters. Both these men were killed by snipers. The barrage in Regina Trench had now slackened, but at 7.15am a good deal of machine gun fire could be heard, but it seemed to be well to the left flank.

Nothing could be observed from Regina Trench of the assaulting companies. The ground fell away hiding the objective and the day had become misty. About 7.30am a slightly wounded man came in. He belonged to the left assaulting company, and stated that all was going well when he was hit, and that the enemy trench was quite close and that he could see it. A few more wounded men came in, but they had been hit on the way forward and could give no information. I therefore sent forward two more runners, ordering them to move more to my left and avoid Sixteen Street and Point "66". One was wounded and the other never returned. Later I sent three more men extending them along my front. One of these men returned but could give no information of any value. The other two men were never seen again.



Scene at Ancre

The Officer in Command (OC) 7th RWKR and



myself now received a message from Brigade Headquarters that the situation on the front of the left Company 7th RWKR and on the front of the 7th Buffs and the 7th Queens must be cleared up.

2/Lieut G J Howcroft, my Bombing Officer, had twice volunteered to try and get forward, and I sent for him, told him the situation and that he was to try and get forward as far as he could. He was shot at almost as soon as he left Regina Trench and after being twice missed was shot in the body.

In view of the number of runners who had been hit or who had not returned it seemed impossible to get forward by direct means. It appeared likely - at that time - that the enemy had snipers in shell holes, who in the darkness of the morning when the attack started might have escaped notice of the assaulting troops, and also escaped the barrage. [There had been reports that when the troops went forward in the dark, many had lost track of each other as they could see no further than 3 yards.] Anyone moving along shallow portions of Regina Trench was also sniped at.

A message was received from the OC 7th Queens that a wounded sergeant reported he had seen flanks of 7th Queens and 7th Buffs and that they were in touch and were consolidating. Wounded men began coming in, but none could give any clear account of the situation, except that the enemy rifle fire and machine gun fire was heavy. A runner of the OC of A Company 7th Buffs, right assaulting company, came in badly wounded in two places. He reported that his Company Commander had sent him forward when the first wave were waiting for the barrage to lift from the objective. He saw that the trench was full of Germans and the fire was heavy. He was immediately badly wounded. He had gradually crawled back to Regina Trench.

It was arranged that two platoons from 7th Queens and 7th Buffs should move forward and clear the ground between Regina and Desiré Trenches, and gain touch with the assaulting companies. Meanwhile, the OC of the 7th RWKR had ordered a Company to gradually work to its left along Desiré Trench from that part which had been captured in the morning by his right company.

About 4.15pm 2 platoons of D Company moved forward from Hessian Trench. It was growing dark and misty and the movement did not draw a great deal of fire, though about 6 men were soon shot by snipers. Both platoons on approaching Desiré Trench were heavily fired on and bombs were thrown at them. The platoon Commander acted most gallantly and tried again and again to get information, but without success. They eventually withdrew to Regina Trench.

Meanwhile an Officers' patrol was sent forward to try and get in touch with the left of the Buffs and the right of the Queens. The patrol was heavily fired on, and after several attempts withdrew, but losing its way did not reach Regina Trench till early in the morning of 19 November.

At 8pm I received orders to report to Brigade Headquarters at Mouquet Farm to report the situation. On return, I reached Battalion Headquarters in Hessian Trench about 2pm, 19 November.

The night passed fairly quietly but there were several heavy bursts of fire in Regina and Hessian Trenches.

In compliance with orders received from Brigadier that Desiré Trench must be taken by us on



19th inst, I sent for OC C and D Companies and gave the detailed orders being received from Brigade."

The report concluded with the following points:

There was only one unwounded survivor of A Coy. All officers of A and B Companies were dead, wounded or missing.

An officer and several men of A Coy and 2 men of 7th RWKR, all badly wounded, were found in dugouts in Desiré Trench. All hit in front of the objective and the Germans brought them in late afternoon, tended their wounds and treated them well. The Germans left them at dawn. Other wounded men were also found who had been pulled to safety by the Germans.

The shrapnel barrage was inefficient and short resulting in the wounding of a platoon commander and his sergeant.

D Coy suffered 30% casualties from rifle fire.

Our aircraft, prior to attack, reported no sign of the enemy in Grandcourt or Desiré Trench, but post battle intelligence summary concludes there were three German companies present.

The men going "over the top" had been told to expect little opposition.

The battle was a relative success, but at a heavy cost. The battalion casualty list recorded 3 officers killed, 4 wounded, 1 missing, and 23 other ranks killed, 76 wounded and 124 missing.

On 21 November, Stanley and MacDonald and their comrades were exhausted and weak in numbers. They were relieved by the Royal Berkshire Regiment and fell back to Ollivers. Over the next few days they were moved back, firstly on buses but then by marching, through Hartonville, Candas and Neuilly L'Hopital. In the run-up to Christmas they undertook much cleaning of weapons, bayonet training and foot inspections. Christmas and Boxing Days were given as holiday, a brief respite from much hard work and dealing with the harsh winter conditions. On 28 December they "rapid route-marched" to Hautevillers.

On 14 January 1917, the Battalion was brought back up to strength with the arrival of seven new 2nd Lieutenants and a draft of 315 other ranks. The aim over the winter period was to be spent in preparation for a spring offensive. However, the battalion was back in the trenches at Boom Ravine on 23 February, this time more successfully, being relieved on 21 March.

Special training continued until 20 April, then a route-march to Neuville Vitasse where, on 28 April, they went into reserve trenches south of Arras and close to Chérisy. Here they bivouacked until 30 April.

On 1 May Stanley and MacDonald began their final action in the Third Battle of the Scarpe. The regimental war diary details their final days:

Place	Summary events and Information
May 1 st 1917 NEUVILLE VITASSE:	Bivouacs in trenches at N.14.C. (N.E. of NEUVILLE VITASSE). 8.30 p.m.: 7th Buffs relieved 7th Queens in Front and Support Positions (Right). Infantry Brigade Sector as follows:- 2 Platoons "A" Company 7th Buffs relieved 2 Platoons "A" Company 7th Queens on right of front line. 2 Platoons "B" Company 7th Buffs relieved 2 Platoons "C" Company 7th Queens



Place	Summary events and Information
1 st Cont	<p>on left of front line.</p> <p>Front Line extended from O.25.d.7.3 in touch with 54th Infantry Brigade on right, to O.26.c.0.8. in touch with 8th East Surrey Regiment on left.</p> <p>2 Platoons "A" Company 7th Buffs relieved 2 Platoons "A" Company 7th Queens on right of support line.</p> <p>1 Platoon "B" Company 7th Buffs relieved 1 Platoon "B" Company 7th Queens in Strong Point in rear of Support Line.</p> <p>"C" and "D" Companies 7th Buffs relieved 2 Companies 7th Royal West Kent Regiment in Southern Portion of trenches in N.30.b.</p> <p>Battalion Headquarters moved to QUARRY N.30.b.</p>
2 nd	<p>2nd May: 1.5 a.m.: The Relief was complete at 1.5 a.m. (Midnight)</p>
3 rd	<p>Companies commenced to take up their Battle Positions as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <u>"A" and "B" Companies – Assaulting Companies.</u> In 3 waves – 1st & 2nd waves in front trench. 3rd wave with 3 Platoons 7th Royal West Kent Regiment (detailed as dug-out clearing parties) in shell holes between front and support trench. (NOTE – 1 Platoon, 7th R.W. Kent Regiment, was allotted to right Assaulting Company and 2 Platoons 7th R.W. Kent Regiment to left Assaulting Company).2. <u>"C" Company – Supporting Company.</u> In support trench.3. <u>"D" Company – Battalion Reserve.</u> In shell holes in rear of Support Trench.4. <u>Battalion Report Centre was at Gun Pits O.25.d.6.5.</u> <p>The two leading waves commenced to assemble in front of the first trench at 3.15 a.m. This was done quietly and well in spite of darkness. The moon having set and all were in position by 3.35 a.m. being in touch with 12th Middlesex Regiment in the right and 8th East Surrey Regiment on the left.</p> <p>At that time it was impossible, owing to the darkness, to see the lines of men until within 2 or 3 yards of them.</p> <p>At ZERO hour (3.45 a.m.) it was still just as dark and it was not until the Eastern edge of CHERISY was reached that it was possible to see at all distinctly.</p> <p>The barrage did not start well, several batteries appearing to start prematurely, and it did not immediately become intense.</p> <p>The enemy opened fairly heavy rifle and machine gun fire at once but all Companies of the Battalion were clear of our front line before the enemy barrage commenced. When it started it was not at first very heavy but increased to some intensity on the valley in rear of our front line, and on areas further back.</p> <p>Owing to the darkness, sections, platoons, and Companies soon got intermingled. Before the enemy's front trench was reached, the left of the 12 Middlesex Regiment came across the front of the right Company of the 7th Buffs, but the Company Commander of that Company managed to get the left shoulders of these men up.</p> <p>Right Company Headquarter passed into CHERISY through the plantation at about O.32.b.0.8, and was at that time in touch with portions of the 12th</p>



Place	Summary events and Information
3 rd Cont	<p>Middlesex Regiment and also in reaching the main street of CHERISY running N.N.E. & S.S.W.</p> <p>The O.C. right Company 7th Buffs, finding the party of 12th Middlesex Regiment on his right thought they were not in touch with the remainder of their Battalion, moved out of the village in a half-right direction, and on reaching the bed of the SENSEE River, found the right of the 7th Buffs.</p> <p>It became apparent, however, that the enemy still held a portion of the trench opposite the extreme left of the 12th Middlesex Regiment's frontage. So a front stop was established and efforts made to progress through the trench. The first attempt was repulsed by Machine Gun fire down the trench which was perfectly straight.</p> <p>Two Lewis Gun detachments were wiped out in this way.</p> <p>The trench was deep and narrow, and bombing was consequently difficult. As no impression could be made and the Battalion on the right did not advance, a Stokes Gun was sent up to this Company about 6.40 a.m., and finally ground was gained as far as the Sunken Road about 0.32.a.1.9.</p> <p>It had become apparent from reports received that the progress made by 8th East Surrey Regiment and the left of the 7th Buffs was satisfactory and that they were on the "Blue Line".</p> <p>About 6.30 a.m. the enemy brought a machine gun into "no man's land" and in rear of the right of "D" Company 7th Buffs. This gun also brought fire to bear on the crest close to the Battalion Report Centre, so all spare signallers and orderlies were placed in shell holes in the vicinity to watch the flanks.</p> <p>Between 7.15 a.m. and 7.30 a.m., 3 reports were received from the Assaulting Companies. Captain BLACK, commanding right assaulting Company reported that his right was absolutely in the air, but that he was forming a defensive flank. Also that the enemy was shelling the Southern outskirts of CHERISY. This message was timed 6.25 a.m. Lieut WOTTON, Commanding Supporting Company, reported that at 6.30 a.m. he was at 0.33.b.5.9. and was consolidating. That he was in touch on his right with elements of "A" and "B" Companies, 7th Buffs, and with 8th East Surrey Regiment on his left. He could find no other officers of the Buffs.</p> <p>2nd Lieut DUNGEY, Commanding Left Assaulting Company reported that at 6.15a.m. he was on railway beyond SENSEE River at 0.33.a.5.1., that he had only 12 men with him and that the remainder had gone too much to the left. That he was in trench with 8th East Surrey Regiment on his left and with a Platoon of "A" Company on his right. He was held up by a machine gun at 0.33.b.6.3. but had a Stokes Gun dealing with this gun.</p> <p>A second report from Lieut. WOOTON timed 7.0 a.m. stated that he was on 1st Objective and that he was in touch with 8th East Surrey Regiment. The enemy appeared to be forming up for a counter attack on his front and left.</p> <p>This information was sent on to the Brigade in a message timed 7.40 a.m. Before this the O.C. 7th Royal West Kent Regiment arrived in our front line.</p> <p>At 8.35 a.m. a report was sent to the Brigade giving the situation as follows:-</p>



Place	Summary events and Information
3 rd Cont	<p>8.35 a.m.: Left of 7th Buffs in touch with 8th East Surrey Regiment on "blue line". Line of 7th Buffs runs along SENSEE River to S.E. edge of CHERISY village. Position of right difficult owing to reported counter-attack, result of which has not come in. Reserve Company still in CABLE TRENCH with bombstop about O.26.c.2.1., beyond which point to its right trench is held by enemy. Captain LONGBOURNE is now in our original front line with 2 Companies 7th Queens. 7th R.W.Kent (less 2 Platoons and H.Q.) have moved forward. Assaulting Battalions on right of 7th Buffs have not moved forward yet from original front line.</p> <p>9.0 a.m.: At 9.0 a.m. the following report was sent to the Brigade and repeated to O.C. 7th Queens.</p> <p>Captain BLACK, O.C. Right Company 7th Buffs reports that right of Buffs still in the air and protected only by very weak posts and open to attack from CHERISY Lane and Strong Point at O.33.a.10.05.</p> <p>Original advance reached point O.33.a.10.05 but owing to no troops being up on right, the ground was lost.</p> <p>9.30 a.m.: About 9.30 a.m., an officer sent from Battalion Headquarters to find out the situation on 54th Infantry Brigade Front found a fresh attack in progress. No success was achieved and the right flank of 55th Infantry Brigade was thus not relieved.</p> <p>9.40 a.m.: At 9.40 a.m. a message was received from O.C. 7th Queens stating the Brigadier directed 1 Company 7th Queens to move forward and take the place of 1 Company 7th Buffs in CABLE TRENCH, latter Company to move forward to support remainder of 7th Buffs. This message directed Captain LONGBOURNE to move forward "A" Company 7th Queens for this purpose.</p> <p>It was thereupon decided to move this Company forward by the left of the Brigade front and gradually withdraw "D" Company, 7th Buffs, and send them forward. The commencement of this operation was delayed by the fact that "A" Company 7th Queens was on the right of the Line and had consequently a long distance to go in moving to the left. Movement was very difficult near the top of the ridge where this Company was, owing to machine gun fire.</p> <p>At about this time a message was received from the 55th Infantry Brigade as follows:- Time 9.35 a.m.. Situation of 54th Infantry Brigade still obscure; they have not reached the "Blue Line". 7th Buffs must form a defensive flank facing right.</p> <p>Almost simultaneously with this, a message was received directing 7th Buffs and 8th East Surrey Regiment to advance to the "RED LINE" and 7th R.W. Kent Regiment to consolidate the "BLUE LINE".</p> <p>11.0 a.m.: About 11.0 a.m. reports were received that a general retirement was taking place, and it soon became apparent that the whole line was coming back. The enemy established an intense bombardment of our front line system and of the valley in rear and his machine gun fire was heavy.</p> <p>CABLE TRENCH was by this time full of men in addition to "D" Company 7th Buffs, but owing to the fact that the enemy and our troops were hopelessly intermingled, it was impossible to fire on the enemy except on occasions.</p>



Place	Summary events and Information
3 rd Cont	<p>Those men who passed through CABLE Trench on the way back were rallied by a number of officers in our front and support line, and those who passed through these trenches were rallied in the valley, and came forward to the trenches again. In half an hour the trenches were strongly held, and the situation well in hand. As regards the evacuation of CABLE Trench, Lieut FINE, Commanding "D" Company, 7th Buffs, states the retirement commenced on the left and became general until his Company alone remained. Finding himself isolated he withdrew slowly in extended order to our original line. The enemy shell fire continued very heavy well into the afternoon but otherwise the situation became normal.</p> <p>2.0 p.m.: About 2.0 p.m. Battalion were reorganised as much as possible.</p> <p>3.0 p.m.: By this time the enemy shell fire had died down completely, except for a few rounds directed on the QUARRY in N.30.b.</p> <p>5.35 p.m.: At 5.35 p.m. orders were received that the 7th Queens would attack, with a barrage, and capture CABLE Trench, then FONTAINE Trench and the Southern portion of the village.</p> <p>ZERO Hour was given as 6.15 p.m. and heavy shelling was to start at 5.30 and continue to 6.0 p.m. The 7th Queens formed up in our front line, the 7th Buffs in Support trench, from which they were to advance into the front line trench as soon as the Queens attacked.</p> <p>During those preparations no preparatory shelling took place, and at 6.15 p.m. no barrage opened. The 7th Queens, therefore, did not leave their trenches.</p> <p>6.10 p.m.: At 6.10 p.m. a message arrived from Brigade stating that ZERO HOUR was postponed 1 hour i.e. 7.15 p.m.</p> <p>7.15 p.m.: At 7.15 p.m. the 7th Queens attacked under cover of poor barrage; the 7th Buffs immediately occupied the front line as arranged. Owing to heavy Machine Gun and Rifle Fire, the attack did not succeed, and by dark the 7th Queens were back in our lines. The 7th Buffs manned the front line during the night 3/4.</p>
4th	4th May: The night passed quietly, as also the next day.

The 7th Buffs had suffered a casualty list of 2 officers killed, 6 wounded and 4 missing; 25 other ranks killed, 169 wounded and 174 missing.

Stanley and MacDonald were both posted as "wounded and missing" on 3 May 1917.



The East Kent Gazette published the following on 26 May 1917:

LYNSTED – REPORTED MISSING. Private MacDonald Dixon, of The Buffs, the youngest son of Mr. W. Roper Dixon, of Cambridge, Lynsted, is reported missing. Private Dixon was formerly in the East Kent Yeomanry, and had obtained a lance-corporal stripe. He had been promised a commission since he had been in the Buffs. Mr. Dixon has been missing since May 3rd, and he had been serving for a year. He was a member of the staff of Messrs. G. Webb and Co., land and estate agents, Sittingbourne, and the absence of any definite news about him is causing much anxiety.

On 26 October 1917, Stanley was confirmed as having “died of wounds” on 3 May. This would infer that he received some medical attention, probably in the field, but could not be evacuated. MacDonald was later recorded as “killed in action” on 3 May.

On 24 November 1917, the East Kent Gazette reported:

PTE S. M. CLEAVER, THE BUFFS

PRIVATE CLEAVER, THE BUFFS, OF LYNSTED. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cleaver, of Lynsted lane, Lynsted, have just been officially informed that their second son, Private Stanley Monckton Cleaver, of the East Kent Yeomanry, attached to the Buffs, has been killed in France. He had previously been listed as wounded and missing. The young man, who was in the employ of the Sittingbourne Co-operative Society, joined the Yeomanry in September, 1914, at the age of 18 years, and was eventually sent to the Front. He was in the Lewis gun section, and was shot by a sniper during an advance in May last. He was a chum of Gunner Gilbert, whose death is reported above, and like him was an old Lynsted Council schoolboy and a member of Lynsted Church choir. The bereaved parents have two other sons serving, the oldest being a despatch rider in the A.S.C., in France, and the younger one is a 2nd class air mechanic and aerial bomb instructor in the R.F.C.

It was eventually recorded that on the day Stanley and MacDonald died, a further 121 men of 7th (Service) Battalion lost their lives. Of the 123 men lost, only 3 have known graves. The others are all listed together on Bay 2 of the Arras Memorial.

Both were posthumously awarded the British War and Victory Medals. [See Appendix 1]

In February 1918, Stanley's father received £10 5s 10d (£10.29p) of owed pay. He received the War Gratuity of £12 in November 1919. [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £1,250 in today's money.

MacDonald's owed pay was passed to his executors, Gillow Roper Dixon & Bridges Dixon, in December 1920. It amounted to £1 14s 3d (£1.71p) and £5 War Gratuity. Taken together these amount to roughly £310 in today's money.

The Lynsted Memorial records MacDonald as serving in the Royal East Kent Yeomanry. He is also remembered on the Murston Memorial, where he is recorded as being in The Buffs.



Murston War Memorial



MacDonald's wife, Belinda, never remarried and remained in Lynsted where she played an active part in the Parish, in particular as clerk to the Parochial Church Council. At the time of her death in the Kent and Canterbury Hospital on 4 February 1966, aged 78, she was living at Well Cottage in Cellar Hill. MacDonald's daughter Margaret (Peggy) died on 30 June 2009 aged 93. Margaret was still living at Cambridge Farm and was active in the community, including being in charge of the delivery of the monthly Kingsdown, Lynsted and Norton Parish newsletter to the residents of Cambridge Lane until just before her death. While researching the family papers of Malcolm Dalton, commemorated earlier in this book, a note was found talking of how his niece would come to visit "Peggy" and during the winter they would skate on the frozen duck pond at Cambridge Farm.

The Society is indebted to Lucy Grayson and Kate Stew, MacDonald's great, great nieces, for their assistance in recording his life and for use of his portrait photograph.



William Gambrill (see opposite)



**Trooper, 1726, Household Battalion, Household Cavalry and Cavalry of the Line
Formerly Private 3295, Royal East Kent Yeomanry (The Duke of Connaught's Own)
(Mounted Rifles)**

Killed in action 3 May 1917 Aged 27

William was born on 14 July 1889 in Badlesmere to Joseph, a wagoner, and Mary (née Pearsal) Gambrill. He was the youngest of their remaining six children, one having predeceased William. William's older siblings were George, Thomas, Ellen, Annie and Elizabeth. The family moved firstly to Wingfield Farm Cottage, Stalisfield, then to Bogle Farm and then to Lynsted Court, where Joseph worked as a wagoner and William as a farm labourer.

On 28 February 1914, in Lynsted Church, William married Lilian Gertrude Hawkins, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Mercy Hawkins of The Malt House, Lynsted Lane. Their first child, Douglas William, was born on 27 July 1914 and a second, Maretta May, on 8 April 1916. William was also step-father to Lilian's son, Arthur Smeed Hawkins, born on 3 November 1909. William and his family lived in Champion Cottages, Greenstreet, Lynsted and he was now employed as a crane-driver in the paper store of the Sittingbourne paper mill.

William enlisted in the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles (REKMR) in Sittingbourne on 9 December 1915 and immediately put into reserve. On 9 June 1916, he was posted into the REKMR 3/1st. Then on 25 October 1916, he was transferred to the newly formed Household Battalion¹ Reserve, a training battalion, and given his new rank of "Trooper". The men were paid the cavalry rate of pay, a few pence more than the infantry, and they wore cavalry service dress when on leave. William would have trained at the new infantry battalion's Combermere Barracks, Windsor.

On 4 November 1916, William completed his training and transferred to the Household Battalion. Just 4 days later, on 8 November, he embarked for France from Southampton. Disembarking at Le Havre on 9 November, the battalion moved to their depot at Honfleur and joined the 10th Brigade of the 4th Division, an experienced formation of the regular army that had been in France since August 1914.

Most of the men of the Household Battalion had undergone little training before they went into the trenches for the first time on 8 December 1916 at Sailly-Sailliesel, east of Combles and Morval in the Somme Valley. The Battle of the Somme had come to an end on 18 November but German artillery fire continued.

The battlefields had become a quagmire and it was recorded that over forty men had to be saved by being dug out. During December 1916 and January 1917 many of the men were suffering from total exhaustion, so it should come as no surprise that William was admitted to the No 6 General Hospital in Rouen on 16 December with trench foot. On the 28 December, he was transferred to a convalescence hospital before being discharged on 1 February back to the depot at Honfleur.

The Household Battalion had now moved to trenches at Bouchavesne but by 17 February 1917

¹ The Household Battalion was an infantry battalion formed on 1st September 1916 and disbanded in 1918. It was formed from the reserves of the Household Cavalry regiments (the 1st Life Guards, 2nd Life Guards and the Royal Horse Guards), converting cavalrymen into foot soldiers to help meet demands for infantry on the Western Front.



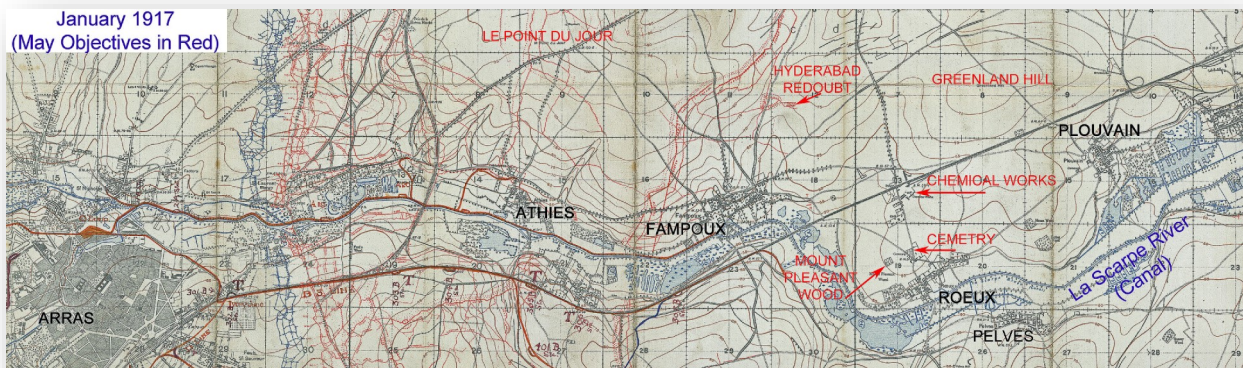
William was back in hospital in Rouen suffering from bronchial catarrh and "pyrexia of unknown cause (fever)". By 27 February he had re-joined his regiment, who were now in a 'rest area' of Arras.

In the lead-up to the action in which William died, the Household Cavalry moved from Bertangles to Beavul and arrived at Villers-L'Hopital on 7 March where they began a period of intensive platoon and company training. Practice trenches were dug for bombing and Lewis Gun classes. Between 11 and 17 March, they moved on again to Petit-Bouret sur Canche, Savy, Laresset and Maroeuil, finally arriving at Camblain-Chatelain for further training and specialist classes. On 8 April, the Battalion marched to Frevillers, from where they went to the front to carry out a scheme of carrying-work before taking part in costly operations on 11 and 12 April. They suffered 150 casualties, four of whom were officers, before retiring to dug-outs. Returning belatedly (the guides had got lost) to trenches on 17 April, they suffered very heavy bombardments and sniping with 4 O.R. killed and 22 wounded; one officer was wounded.

From billets, the Battalion travelled in motor buses on 21 April to Ambrines for Company training. From there they marched into billets north of Arras to prepare for the attack planned for the beginning of May. On 30 April, they moved into Trenches to relieve the 15th and 16th Royal Scots and 10th Lincolns.

The Household Battalion operations on 3 and 4 May 1917, were intended to seize the two objectives known respectively as the Black and Blue lines. The Royal Warwickshire Regiment was to attack on the left with the same two objectives in view whilst the Somersetshire Light Infantry (attached to the 10th Infantry Brigade for operations) was to take and hold that portion of the Black Line that lay between the right of the Household Battalion and the Scarpe to the East of Roeux village.

The Household Battalion was ordered to attack on a two Company frontage with two platoons in each wave – 1st wave to take 1st objective – 2nd wave to take 2nd objective – half a Company to act as moppers-up for the buildings round the Cemetery and the remaining half to form a defensive flank facing south.



On 15 May 1917, Major John H M Kirkwood summed up the actions of 2, 3 and 4 May:

At 9.30 p.m. on May 2nd the Battalion moved into their position in the assembly trenches which had been cleared the whole of the day to allow the heavy artillery to bombard the lines round the Cemetery and Chateau. I visited the front line and Support Trenches and found all the men in position by 11.30 p.m.

Battalion H.Q. was situated at the Embankment (named Crump later).



In order to try and keep in touch with the trend of events I sent Lieut Cazalet, as forward observing officer to a spot approximately I.19.c.4.7. together with two signallers who established a line with Battalion H.Q.

At Zero hour 3.45 a.m. it was still very dark and the darkness – as I heard later – was increased by a heavy smoke barrage which caused the waves to begin to lose direction almost immediately.

No reliable information reached me for some considerable time, as my forward observation posts were unable to report anything owing to the smoke and the darkness.

Information from two wounded N.C.O.s, however, pointed to one or two isolated parties having pushed forward across the Roeux – Gavrelle Road whilst the greater number appeared to be held up in front of the Cemetery and in front of the Road South of Corona trench, owing to very heavy Machine Gun fire.

The first authentic report came through the Somersetshire Light Infantry who were almost immediately checked in their advance through Roeux Wood by intense machine gun fire.

In view of this the O.C. Seaforths and I after talking the matter over decided to telephone the 10th Brigade H.Q. to ask for a Battalion to come up in support in order to attack Roeux village from the direction of Mount Pleasant Wood and thus relieve the pressure in the Wood itself, this message was sent at 5.10 a.m., but the suggestion was not consented to.

Soon after this I had an order from the Brigade to send out to my forward posts and tell them to consolidate where they were and also to send out two platoons from carrying Company to support the defensive flank on my right. I was on the point of sending out runners with orders accordingly (5am to 5.30am) when information came through to say that most of my men were back again in the front line trenches. I sent up Lieut Cazalet to clear up the situation and he returned about 6.15 telling me that this was the case and that only one officer – 2nd Lieut Baker had returned. I then ordered 2nd Lieut Wanklyn (6.38 a.m.) with two platoons from my carrying company to go up and re-organize the front line and hold the same sector as we had assembled in. At 10.45 a.m. I received an order from the Brigade to try and push forward scouts to see whether we were holding out near the Cemetery owing to snipers and machine guns this was not possible in the open but a report came through from a Sergeant of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment at 11.7 a.m. to say that 40-50 of the Brigade were holding out along the Roeux – Gavrelle Road – later on we heard that most of these had been taken prisoner by the enemy.

At about 12.30 p.m., I sent forward two bombing parties up Corona trench under 2nd Lieut Wanklyn to work forward as far as possible and then block the trench. This movement was ordered by Lt. Col. Forster – Royal Warwickshire Regiment – commanding the front line system – and it was to co-operate with some patrols of the Royal Irish Fusilier and Royal Warwickshire Regiment working up towards the Chateau. The bombing party worked forward along Corona trench until the trench came to a dead end which was much blown in, and here it established itself. The patrols that were working on its flanks having met with a good deal of opposition were unable to establish themselves to advance far.

Several small parties of the enemy were seen on the East side of the Roeux – Gavrelle Road by my bombing parties and a machine gun was located and reported.

In the meantime the enemy counter-attacked near the Chemical Works but our artillery



dispersed them, though they were reported to have captured some of our advanced posts.

Enemy artillery had been fairly quiet after the counter-barrage had ceased, and for the remainder of the day the line remained inactive.

After dusk several small parties and individuals who had been lying in no-mans-land returned to the line, and it was ascertained that no one remained holding out in the neighbourhood of the Cemetery.

At 10 p.m. I received orders from Lt. Col Forster to establish a line of posts from I.19.c.6.6 to West edge of Cemetery. Work was to have commenced at 11 p.m. – but owing to the difficulty of getting my working parties organized, and as my orders did not reach the front line until 10.30-11 pm, work was not commenced until after 12 midnight. My orders were to dig a line of 9 posts at about 50 yards interval and to man them when they were complete. Owing to the fact, however, that the ground had not been previously reconnoitred by daylight with a view to digging the posts and that they were started somewhat hurriedly, the officer in charge took a wrong direction, and the posts were established in a more easterly direction than they should have been. On the following night, however, I had this rectified and the line as laid down was established and held.

The above completed the operation from Zero hour May 3rd until dawn on May 4th. During this time we suffered the following casualties:-

Officers		Other ranks	
<i>Killed</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Killed</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Missing</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Wounded</i>	<i>91</i>
<i>Wounded</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>114</i>
Total 10		221	

Practically all of which were caused by machine gun fire.

For the bravery shown throughout the battle to take Roeux, the Household Battalion won a Military Cross and nine Military Medals. The capture of the tiny villages of both Roeux and Fampoux cost the Household Battalion more than half the original strength of the Battalion.

On 30 May 1917, William was officially reported as “missing” on 3 May 1917. His wife was informed of this on 26 June. On the 21 July it was confirmed he had been “killed in action” on 3 May. This would have been as a result of his body being found and identified.

William is buried in the Roeux British Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France, Grave Ref: A 41.





The cemetery was made by fighting units between April and November 1917 and in it they laid to rest 350 of their comrades.

William's death was announced in the Faversham and North East Kent News on 11 August 1917:

DEATH OF A LYNSTED MAN

Official news has been received of the death in France of Private William Gambrill, of the Household Battalion. Private Gambrill, who was 28 years of age, was the youngest son of Mr and Mrs Gambrill, of Lynsted Court. He formerly worked in the Sittingbourne Paper Mills. He joined the Buffs on June 8th 1916, and went to France on November 8th, afterwards being transferred to the Household Battalion. He leaves a widow and three children, who live in Greenstreet, for whom, as well as for the parents, much sympathy is felt.

The deceased's platoon officer wrote to the young widow:- "Your husband was a very good soldier, and one the Battalions can ill afford to lose. With very deep sympathy, yours very truly, OLIVER WAKEFIELD, Sec-Lieut."

William's platoon leader, who wrote the kind words to his widow, Sec Lieutenant Oliver Wakefield, was himself killed in action on 12 Oct 1917.

William was posthumously awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medals. [See Appendix 1]

In September 1917, William's widow and children received his owed pay of £8 18s 3d (£8.91p). In January 1918, his widow, who was now living in Jeffries Cottage, Mill Lane, Lynsted, received the news that she had been awarded a pension, back-dated to 31 December 1917, of £1 6s 3d. In October 1919 she also received his War Gratuity of £3. [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £950 in today's money.

Lilian remarried in 1919 to Charles William Probert of Deerton Street and had another daughter, Marjorie, in 1923. Lilian died in 1947 aged 58.

William's brother George served in The Buffs and the Durham Light Infantry. He served in France but was discharged from the army after contracting malaria in Salonika. Both of William's parents are buried in Lynsted Churchyard extension.

William and another Lynsted casualty, Henry Carrier, whose biography appears next, have consecutive service numbers in the REKMR and only a few digits apart in the Household Battalion. They were possibly friends who had enlisted in the Royal East Kent Yeomanry together, or simply just next in line in the queue.

William is also commemorated in the regimental chapel of the Household Battalion in Holy Trinity Parish and Garrison Church, Trinity Place, Windsor.



Henry Thomas Carrier (see opposite)

Henry Thomas CARRIER

**Trooper 1737, Household Battalion, Household Cavalry and Cavalry of the Line
Formerly Private, 3296, Royal East Kent Yeomanry (The Duke of Connaught's Own)
(Mounted Rifles)**

Killed in action 11 May 1917 Aged 31

Son of Henry Julius, a garden and orchard labourer, and Elizabeth Jane (née Gage), Henry Thomas was born in the house next door to Newhouse Farm, Greenstreet, Lynsted, on 17 November 1885. He was christened in Teynham Church on 16 December. Along with Henry's younger sister, Harriet Jane, the family had also lived in Cellar Hill and Wilkin's Cottages in Greenstreet, Lynsted



*Left: Mr Wilkins Right: Henry Carrier
Picture courtesy of Rosemary Ivory, Henry's Granddaughter*

Henry Thomas worked as a butcher's assistant in Mr Wilkin's butchers shop in Greenstreet. In later years this became Read's butchers and is now converted to accommodation.

In addition to his day job, Henry served in the Greenstreet Division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, and in the Teynham and Lynsted Fire Brigade.

On Christmas Day 1907, at the age of 22, Henry married Alice (née Banning), daughter of Albert, a ship riveter living in Chatham, and Bertha (née Field), in Lynsted Church.

At the time of the 1911 Census Henry and Alice were living in Green Villa (now 92 London Road), Greenstreet, and had a daughter, Isabella Evelyn (known as Evelyn), born on 31 December 1909. Four further children would be born, Henry Albert on 29 April 1912, Ruby Alicia Banning on 4 July 1913, Ronald Kitchener on 7 May 1914 and Joan Kathleen on 27 February 1916.

Henry enlisted in Sittingbourne on 11 December 1915 into the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles (REKMR). At the time of his enlistment the family were living in "Rose Lea", Greenstreet. He was immediately put into reserve. On 9 June 1916, he was called up and posted to the REKMR 3/1st. On 28 October 1916 Henry was transferred in to Household Battalion Reserve, which was then training at their barracks in Windsor, and given the new rank of "Trooper".

Up until this point, Henry's military career coincided with that of William Gambrill (see previous biography). Henry and William enlisted, trained and were transferred to the Household Battalion together. They had consecutive regimental numbers during their time in the REKMR, and were just



a few digits apart on transfer to the Household Battalion. However, their stories, for a while, went in different directions when William left for France on 8 November 1916.

Henry continued with his training until his posting into the Household Battalion proper on 3 February 1917, when he immediately embarked for France from Southampton. The following day he disembarked in Le Havre and Henry and William's stories then coincide again and are detailed in the previous biography.

William was killed on 3 May 1917 but Henry would live for a further 8 days. Despite the battalion being heavily under strength, the sixth and final attack on Roeux began. The attack was preceded by the heaviest bombardment seen since the start of the battle on 3 May. Smoke shells gave a screen which prevented a clear picture of the attack from Battalion Headquarters. The infantry moved off at 7.30pm and the troops were ordered to attack the area around the railway station and the land to the north, while other units attacked the village itself. The story of his remaining days are detailed in the Household Battalion war diary:

Date	Summary events and Information
4 th May 1917	Reorganisation of Line. Pioneers (W. Yorks) assisted ahead of Seaforths were completed from I.19.e.7.5. to I.19.B.1.2. in line with West corner of CEMETERY.
5 th	Very quiet. Sniping active at night. Posts deepened.
6 th	3 a.m. Bombing attack by 2nd Lieut. Wanklyn on enemy Listening Posts I.19.c.6.05 after excellent reconnaissance by 2nd Lieut. Moffat causing German retaliation along whole line.
7 th	Relieved in line by Royal Irish Fusiliers. Battalion came back to 4th German system H.22.A.a.3.
8 th	Battalion reorganised into 5 platoons. Colonel Postal (?) arrived at Transport.
9 th	Battalion rested.
10 th	Battalion proceeded up line to original position in front line. Battalion H.Q. at [Green?] Trench (H.24.D.8.9.). Battalion occupy left of original front line. East corner of MOUNT PLEASANT WOOD (I.19.A.9.1.) and junction CEYLON and Front line.
11 th	Battalion took part in attack on CEMETERY. 7.30 p.m. Objective to dig in East of N. end of village. Officers: Capt. Tobin (?). 1st Platoon Lt Bridgeman; 2nd Platoon 2nd Lt. Price; 3rd Platoon 2nd Lt. Stockwood; 4th Platoon 2nd Lt Wanklyn. H.Q. Major Kirkwood. Lt. Dill – Cazalet – Sandeford - Capt. Sloan R.A.M.P. Attack successful. Seaforths mopping up in rear of Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers on right. R.W.A. in reserve. Casualties again very heavy – 2nd Lt Stockwood only officer in line.



On 16 May, Major J H M Kirkwood of the Household Battalion wrote his narrative of operations undertaken on 11/12 May:

At 5.30 p.m. on Z day I moved my Battalion H.Q. up to the head of CEYLON trench near the Junction with CAP. Here I established a telephone line in connection with the Brigade Report Centre. I also took Lieut. Cazalet forward as Intelligence Officer leaving Lieut. Dill with the greater part of the H.Q. staff at Battalion H.Q. in CRUMP dug-outs.

At 6 p.m. I went round the line and found the whole situation satisfactory – Officers and men keen and confident. Captain Tobin commanding the whole line, which was divided into 4 platoons, total 5 officers and 177 O.R.

At Z hour (7.30 p.m.) I was able to obtain an excellent view of the commencement of the attack and the men went forward in very good order – scarcely one seemed out of place – though I consider that in places the barrage was falling rather short and this caused my left platoon No.1 to bear away to the left after they had worked up close to the barrage – otherwise I saw no fault in the line up to the time that I lost them to view in the smoke.

At Z plus 5 I saw several prisoners come running back through the smoke towards Mt. PLEASANT WOOD.

At 8.15 p.m. Captain Tobin came by wounded, but informed me that all was going well.

At least 50 prisoners had passed my H.Q. by 8.15 p.m.

A message brought in at 8.45 p.m. stated that my left platoon (No.4) as well as part of No.3, had gained its objective and was consolidating.

At 8.50 p.m. Lieut. McPherson of the Seaforths, who had been forward to clear up the situation (he did very valuable work during the night) returned to report that my left was alright; but that my right centre and right were held up in the gardens round the Cemetery and were being enfiladed by M.G. fire from the houses – he also informed me that there appeared to be a wide gap onwards from there to the R. Irish Fusiliers. The Seaforth mopping up party had mostly returned to the trench which ran West of the Cemetery across our front – this they were consolidating.

9 p.m.: I sent Lieut. Cazalet down at once to R. Warwickshire H.Q. to inform Colonel Forster, and asking him if I might use his front line Companies to strengthen the position and gain our objective.

I had been told that I should not use the troops holding our front line excepting in the case of a counter-attack and then only if very urgently needed.

Consequently, I did not feel justified in using them unless I received the consent of the O.C. Royal Warwickshire Regiment and the Brigade.

9.21 p.m.: At 9.21 p.m. I received a reply back that I was to send forward “B” Company Royal Warwickshire Regiment (this amounted to less than 30) and that one company of the King’s Own were coming up to reinforce the front line. I then directed O.C. “B” Company R.W.R. to advance at once, and support my right and right centre in the direction of the CEMETERY. This order was sent off in writing at 9.30 p.m.

9.33 p.m.: I sent a runner off at the same time to 2nd Lieut. Stockwood who was the only officer whom I could ascertain to be in the advance line, telling him that support was being



sent up to his right.

9.57 p.m.: A further message from O.C. R.W.R. arrived at 9.57 p.m. saying the his "C" Company was being sent up to establish communication between my left and the Hampshire Regiment who were co-operating on the left of the 10th Brigade. Immediately on receipt of this I sent off a message in reply to say that all reports gave me to understand that we were linked up on the left and that my right was far more in need of support. This message I sent off at 10.20 p.m. but in the meantime "C" Company R.W.R. had already been despatched (I might here add that this rather pointed to overlapping, as I had been previously given to understand that all 3 Companies of R.W.R. were under my orders, and I was relying upon this in order to be able to deal with any urgent call for support – more especially as each Company of R.W.R. was less than a full platoon strength.)

9.50 p.m.: At 9.50 pm I heard from my right centre platoon that they had pushed forward and got in touch with the two left platoons, but had been entirely cut off from the right platoon. I gathered that the combination of the darkness and fairly heavy machine gun fire from houses in the neighbourhood of the cemetery had accounted for this.

10.38 p.m.: At 10.38 pm I sent a message to O.C. SKEW, which message I repeated to the Brigade Major on the telephone (This was of very little use to me as the line was frequently broken during the night) to say that I was confident of holding the objective gained and of consolidating the entire position providing that supports were sent to me to operate after moonrise or before dawn as the darkness rendered any attempt to straighten things out futile.

About this time I heard that part of "B" Company R.W.R. had run into machine gun fire and got separated, 14 of them had returned to the front line and the remainder (as I learnt later) had joined their "C" Company and had consolidated on our left in touch with the Hampshire Regt, although I should have preferred their assistance on my right.

11.55 p.m.: At 11.55 pm I received a message from O.C. R.W.R telling me that if I utilized his remaining men, that he would send the Company of King's Own up to occupy our front line in place of them.

12.35 a.m.: At 12.35 am I heard from Lieut McPherson that three of the machine guns that were to have been with my advanced troops, if they took the objective were back with the Seaforths and that only one was up in my front line on the N.E. of the CEMETERY.

1.5 a.m.: At 1.5 am I heard through a runner from 11th Brigade that all their objectives had been taken.

About this time the Brigade Major 10th Brigade arrived at my H.Q. and I told him that I felt confident about holding the position providing I could obtain enough men to send forward before dawn to capture the houses on the road round the Cemetery and I asked him to let me have at least 50 men of the King's Own as well as the remainder of the R.W.R. This he agreed to do.

I then sent a further message to Lieut. Stockwood to hold on and to consolidate as energetically as possible. There was some delay before the O.C. "A" Company, R.W.R. and King's Own arrived; in the meantime, I sent a message to O.C. 10th Brigade M.G. in the Seaforth trenches, which I append.

2.45 a.m.: At 2.45 am the Officers commanding detachments of R.W.R. and King's Own arrived, and I gave them the appended orders – This left 50 men of the King's Own to hold the



front line and trenches in support.

4.30 a.m.: At 4.30 am I received a message through the Seaforths that both their parties had reached the houses round the Cemetery and Cross Roads and were clearing them.

4.54 a.m.: At 4.54 am everything appeared quiet in the houses from what I saw personally and I sent a message through to the O.C. King's Own advanced posts to establish communication with my right beyond the Cemetery.

5 a.m.: At 5 am I went up to the line held by my men and found all their posts had been consolidated and that they had established connection with the R.W.R's on their left and the King's Own on their right – but it appeared to me that the houses in rear of our line, South of the Cemetery were still held by the enemy as I noticed flares being sent up from that direction in response to two enemy aeroplanes that were flying low over our line and firing very lights. I told Lieut. Stockwood to send two bombing parties to clear up some of the buildings directly he was able to find the available men. About 5.30 a.m. as I was returning to CEYLON trench via CORONA, I met the Brigade Major, 10th Brigade and told him that the situation was satisfactory, excepting the clearance of the houses in question, and pointed out that we had not enough men to clear up the situation. He suggested that the Seaforths should send a strong detachment forward as bombing parties and I agreed that it was the best possible solution. Captain Booth of the Seaforths was then instructed to go forward to clear the vicinity of the Cemetery at the same time as the 11th Brigade attacked the BLUE Line, viz 6.30 a.m.

This was most effectively done and some 5 Officers and 60 O.R. were taken prisoners.

After this, everything quietened down, and the line was strengthened and consolidated.

During this engagement the enemy barrage was more prolonged than during the operations of May 3rd/4th, and continued several hours.

Casualties during the action:–

Officers		Other Ranks
<i>Killed</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3 and 1 died of wounds</i>
<i>Missing</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>22 (includes 1 wounded)</i>
<i>Wounded</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>68</i>
Total	4	94

Henry had not lived to see the success of the battle. The following morning all the objectives to the north of the railway were taken, and the western half of the village had been occupied. During the day, efforts were made to consolidate the ground and that night the Germans were forced out at bayonet point, allowing the line to move forward to the eastern half of the village.

On 30 May 1917, Henry was officially posted as “missing” since 11 May and his wife informed. The following year, on 23 February 1918, Henry was officially classed as “killed in action on or after 11 May 1917”. His wife, now living at 18 Station Road, Teynham, was informed on 27 February 1918.



The following week, on 2 March 1918, the East Kent Gazette included the following report:

TROOPER H.T. CARRIER, LIFE GUARDS

Mr. and Mrs. H.T. Carrier [sic], of 18 Station road, Teynham, were informed some time ago that their son [sic], Trooper H.T. Carrier, of the Household Battalion, was posted as missing on May 11th, 1917. Since then nothing has been heard of him, and the parents hope that by means of a portrait, some of his former comrades will be able to give some information as to what happened to him.

Trooper Carrier enlisted on June 8th, 1916, up to which time for some years he had been in the employ of Mr. Wilkins, butcher, of Greenstreet. After completing his training he went to France on February 3rd 1917. On May 11th he took part in a third, and this time successful attack on the village of Roeux. A good many men of Trooper Carrier's company were cut off and taken prisoners." However, notwithstanding inquiries made at almost all sources, no tidings have been received.

Trooper Carrier is a married man, his wife being formerly Miss A. Banning, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Banning, of 26, Institute road, Chatham.

On 9 March 1918, they followed up with the following report:

TROOPER H.T. CARRIER, LIFE GUARDS

We published a photograph last week of Trooper H.T. Carrier, of the Life Guards, who had been missing for many months. Mrs Carrier, the wife of the young trooper (not the mother which we stated in error last week), then desired that any information relating to her husband might be sent to her. Since our publication last week, however, the Army Authorities have advised Mrs. Carrier that her husband was killed on May 11th of last year, or since that date. Trooper Carrier was a most useful resident of Greenstreet, for he was a trained member of the Greenstreet Division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, and also a member of the Teynham and Lynsted Fire Brigade. He was greatly respected in the village, and much sympathy is felt for the bereaved widow and children, and also for the young man's parents, who reside in Greenstreet. Mrs Carrier hopes that if by chance the news of the death of her husband reaches any of his late comrades who saw the last of him, she would be glad if they would communicate with her at 18 Station road, Teynham.

Henry's body was never identified. He is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France, Bay 1. As well as the Lynsted memorial, he is also remembered on the Teynham war memorial.

HENRY THOMAS CARRIER HOUSEHOLD BATTALION



Interior of Holy Trinity Garrison Church, Windsor

In addition, Henry and William Gambrill are listed in one of the three books of remembrance in the Holy Trinity Parish and Garrison Church, Trinity Place, Windsor, the Garrison Church of the Household Cavalry, Household Battalion and the Brigade of Guards. The books contain 14,000 names of those who fell from the Brigade of Guards. Altar rails were put up in memory of those of the Household Battalion who fell in the Great War, 1914-1918.

Henry was posthumously awarded the British War and the Victory Medals. [See Appendix 1]

In January 1918 Alice was awarded a widow's pension amounting to £1 11s 6d a week. In today's money around £96. In July 1918, she received Henry's owed pay of £6 9s (£6.35p). In October 1919 she also received his War Gratuity of £3. [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £546 in today's money.

Henry's ultimate sacrifice left a widow, and five children. Alice's post war story is not a happy one and illustrates the physical and emotional hardships that faced those who were left behind.

Alice had tried to supplement her income by working as a cashier in the Co-operative Society. Sadly, as 1919 dawned Alice was in dire straits. The following report in the Faversham and North East Kent News on 25 January 1919 explains:

"NEGLECT OF CHILDREN AT TEYNHAM

The Faversham County Justices had a shocking story of the condition of a home described to them at the Sessions on Thursday in last week, when Alice Carrier, who lives at 18, Station Road, Teynham, and who has lost her husband in the war, was summoned for neglecting her five children (ranging in age from 9 to 3 years) in such a manner as to cause them unnecessary suffering and injury to their



health.

From the evidence of Inspector Ryley, of the RSPCC, it appeared that when he visited the house on January 2nd he found the children very inadequately clothed, while the whole place was in an inconceivably disgusting state. Three of the children had no underclothing on whatever, two girls wearing only a dress and a boy an overcoat. The other two children were not much better off. There was very little furniture in the house. Defendant said she had been ill and unable to attend to the place. The Inspector gave her a few days grace to clear up but when he called again on the 6th, she had done nothing, though the children had a little more clothing on. The place was as disgustingly filthy as before. He then called in Dr. Selby on whose instructions the children were removed to the Guardians' Institution. The children themselves were fairly clean and well nourished. Defendant had been in receipt of a pension of £1/17/11 per week, subsequently increased to £2/4/6. She had had no money since December 28th, but this was entirely due to her failing to send an identity certificate.

Dr Selby said he had never seen anything to equal the state this house was in; it was shocking. The conditions were certainly injurious to the children's health and must have caused them suffering.

Defendant, who had pleaded guilty to the charge, said she was ill with influenza and the children had to look after themselves. She appealed for help to her husband's people, but it was refused. For a time she acted as cashier at the Co-operative Stores, but had to give that up owing to the children. She had always worked hard, and the house would not have got in such a state if she had been well.

Dr Selby said that though it was a bad case he wanted the woman to have another chance. He would undertake to find some bedding, and probably the Guardians would provide some clothes for the children. In any case he hoped the Bench would make an order giving the Health Visitor the right of entry to the house.

The Chairman said the Bench would not have hesitated to send the defendant to prison if the doctor had not appealed on her behalf. Under the circumstances they would give her another chance and bind her over in the sum of £20 to come up for judgment if called upon within the next twelve months. She would also be placed under the supervision of the Probation Officer and the Health Visitor would have the right of entrance at any time.

Defendant, who was neatly dressed in black, said she had not cleaned the house up thoroughly. She assured the Bench it should never get in such a state again.

The Chairman told her she could consider herself generously treated."

We understand that Alice's children never returned to their mother and were brought up by relatives, or, in the case of one of the sons, sent to Sea Cadet School. This separation caused a deep rift in the family that never healed.



Times were difficult for the Carrier family as they had not only lost Henry, but his sister Harriet had also lost her husband, Thomas Wigg, when HMS Kale hit a mine on 27 March 1918 (Thomas is also commemorated in this book). Harriet took up work on the land to support her three children.

In 1921, Henry's widow married William Austin of Teynham. She died in 1956.

Henry's mother and father are seen in this photograph along with some of the children of both Henry and Thomas Wigg.

Carrier and Wigg families (About 1926) Greenstreet

Back Row: Edith R Wigg, Ruby Carrier, Henry Carrier

Front Row: William Thomas Wigg, Margaret Harriett Wigg, Henry Julius Carrier, Elizabeth Jane Carrier (nee Gage), Isabella Evelyn Carrier, Joan Kathleen Carrier, Ronald K Carrier



Photograph by kind permission of David Kerrall

The Society is indebted to Rosemary Ivory, granddaughter of Henry Thomas Carrier and Thomas Wigg, for her valuable contribution to Henry's story.





Faversham and North East Kent News 15th September 1917:

Among those injured in the air raid at Chatham last week was John Hollands, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Hollands, of Greenstreet, who is on the sick bay staff at the Royal Naval Barracks. It seems that it was not until he became exhausted while assisting in the rescue work that it was discovered that he himself had been hit.



Thomas Quaife (see opposite)



**Private T/270324, "B" Company, 10th (Royal East Kent & West Kent Yeomanry) Battalion,
The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)**

**Formerly Private, 2442, 3/1st Royal East Kent Yeomanry,
(The Duke of Connaught's Own) (Mounted Rifles)**

Died of wounds 4 November 1917 Aged 25

The youngest of the four children of Thomas, a maltster, and Mary Ann, Thomas was born in Cranbrook on 28 June 1891. Thomas had two older brothers, Ernest Henry and Frank William. Sadly, Ernest died aged 27 in August 1901. He also had an older sister, Ada Elizabeth.

Thomas's father died in 1904, after which his mother moved the family to 36 Unity Street, Milton, Sittingbourne. Thomas took up employment as a shop assistant in Boots, and his brother Frank became a postman. His sister had worked as a parlour maid in Notting Hill and in 1914 married Edward C Smith.

Although Thomas appears on the Lynsted War Memorial, his link with Lynsted is unclear. There are no records linking him or any of his siblings with the area. However, some records indicate that he may have been employed by the Cooperative Society in the boot department of its Sittingbourne store in East Street. The Cooperative Society had a large presence in Greenstreet, where he may also have worked.

Thomas enlisted in the Royal East Kent Yeomanry, (The Duke of Connaught's Own) (Mounted Rifles) in Canterbury in 1915, and was posted into the 3/1st Training Unit. It appears that he later transferred into the 1/1st and was posted abroad with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in April 1916. By then the regiment had been dismounted, due to the lack of horses, and had become an infantry regiment.

He served first in the Suez Canal Zone; in July 1916 the Regiment moved on to Sollum, situated on the western border of Egypt.

It became clear that the Yeomanry regiments were not going to be re-mounted. Men were fiercely proud to serve in a regiment that bore the name of their county of origin and these associations were respected as far as could be. So on 1 February 1917, the 1/1st West Kent Yeomanry, which was stationed in the coastal town of Matruh 125 miles west of Alexandria, amalgamated with 1/1st Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles to become the newly formed 10th (Royal East Kent & West Kent Yeomanry) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). The new Battalion was made up of 46 officers and 875 other ranks. A and B Companies were made up of men from East Kent and C and D Companies of men from West Kent. The 10th Battalion formed part of the 230th Brigade, 74th Division. The new Battalion formed part of Allenby's Force, which was to be successful in the Palestine offensive against the Turkish Army.

Thomas was part of the newly formed "B" Company, 10th (Royal East Kent & West Kent Yeomanry) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), and in early March sailed from Sollum, Egypt, for Alexandria. From there, Thomas's destination was Sidi Bishr, where the new Battalion was to be equipped. Allenby's plan was to advance slowly and steadily up the coast of Palestine, moving troops forward as fast as the railway could be laid to ensure supplies could reach them.



On 11 April 1917, the 10th Buffs arrived at Deir el Belah, where a strong defensive position was being held. On 15 April, they were ordered to provide outpost duty just north of the Wadi (Arabic for a water-course or river bed that is usually dry unless there is rain) Ghuzze. Preparations were being made for the Second Battle of Gaza, which was scheduled for 17/18 April. Fortunately for Thomas, the 74th Division were held in reserve; but following the battle, trench warfare was decided on until reinforcements could arrive. Therefore, on the 23 April, the Buffs occupied a line in the region of Tel el Jemmi, where they dug trenches. It was a task made more difficult, because they worked in the knowledge that the victory they had expected had not been realised.

The following extract from the 'Historical Records of the Buffs' describes the conditions faced by the 10th Battalion:

"The heat was now becoming intense; that scourge of the country, the hot Khaseem wind was blowing, work was hard and, what was worse than anything else, water was scarce. However, after a few days, a move was made to Shellal and Hisea, still in the Wadi, and here water was found and men could indulge in a wash. For a considerable period the digging of trenches was proceeded with, amidst all sorts of trials and troubles: the heat grew fiercer and fiercer as the season advanced; and, with the heat, animal life in the shape of scorpions, lice, flies, mosquitoes and spiders flourished and multiplied exceedingly....."

.....the next move of the Buffs, which took place on the night of the 27th May, was to the Wadi Levi, which is close to Sheikh Abbas, and from this centre working parties were sent out day and night to improve the front-line trenches or make elaborate redoubts in the second line of defence. During the stay in this Wadi the battalion suffered a good deal of sickness, there being many cases of scarlet fever and diphtheria; also nearly everybody developed boils and blains. It was discovered later that the dug-outs occupied had previously been inhabited by men suffering from the more serious complaints, but the sores were directly attributable to the want of vegetables owing to the difficulties in transport."

The supreme command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force was handed over to Allenby on 28 June 1917 and, as a result, Thomas's long period of hard digging was to be replaced with intensive training. On 9 July 1917, the Buffs marched to a reserved area, known as Dorset House, where, after a brief rest, they undertook day and night attack, and musketry training. A month later, on the night of 7 August, the Battalion marched to the sand dunes 2 miles south west of Deir el Belah to practise field firing. One month later, on the night of 5 September, the Buffs were again digging trenches near Wadi Ghuzze. Much to the relief of the men, this trench reached down to the sea. Sea bathing made a very pleasant change to their recent situation.

As the hottest of the weather was now behind them, plans were being made and the men knew that they would soon be back in action. Indeed, Allenby had always planned that fighting would have to be postponed until the cooler season.

Again, the following extract from the 'Historical Records of the Buffs' describes some of the logistical problems faced:

"Water was Allenby's trouble. He could not keep the field without it and it affected his whole plan of campaign. No stroke at all could be effected without long and careful preparation for the necessary supply of water, and no preparation, however careful, could make that supply anything but a meagre one. A pipe-line 147 miles long brought up what was actually necessary from the Land of Egypt as far as the Wadi, whence it was camel-borne to the troops. There was, however, water at Beersheba and the general determined that it would be his. He



would make a tremendous demonstration, in which the fleet would cooperate, opposite Gaza and cause the enemy to believe that he was determined to take that place. Then while this great feint held the Turks' attention, he would strike resolutely at Beersheba on his other flank. There were great difficulties in the way. There were no roads, which meant that pack animals must carry all necessary stores, and the country was cut up by Wadis that even to move these camels and mules became a considerable difficulty. The railways were improved: the coastal line was pushed on to Khan Yunos; another was made from Dera Belah to a point on the Wadi Ghuzze, and a new one as far towards Beersheba as was safe. The men were carefully trained to exist on as little water as possible and to march with empty water bottles."

Thomas's Battalion started the march south-eastward on the night of 25 October. Four cloudless nights later, they met with the rest of the division at El Khasif, approximately 6 miles from the Turkish lines. In the moonlight of the night of 30 October, all units moved into their battle positions without a hitch. All was now ready for the commencement of the Battle of Beersheba.

It is probable that Thomas sustained the wounds that were to prove fatal, during this battle - B Company being the first to go over the top. The following is a description of the battle by one who was there:

"We reached our jumping-off point around midnight, and at 4am on 31st the advance began with B and C Companies, the unit on our right being the 25th Royal Welch Fusiliers and on the left the 12th Norfolks. Our objective being Z.6. Z.7 works. This consisted of a line of trenches cut in white limestone rock, cleverly sited on the forward slope of a steep gully. A communication trench ran back into sloping ground in the rear of the wire was about seventy to one hundred yards down the sloping front. The leading waves of B and C Companies came under heavy shrapnel fire almost directly they started and the battalion suffered about 60 casualties, but, by continuing their advance and making use of dead ground, they reached Hill 960, which was about one thousand two hundred yards from their objective. It became necessary to bring in D Company into the line to fill a gap caused by the brigade on the right being drawn away. About 10am the 60th Division, who were on the right of the 74th, took Point 1070, and at 12.30 the final attack on Z.6 works was begun and, after a fierce fight, the position was captured. An intensive bombardment had previously been concentrated on the wire, but it was found to have been very ineffectual. By 1.30 the outpost line had been thrown out east of the captured positions and there the men remained for the night. It had been a very long and trying day's fighting in the hot sun and wearing heavy packs and winter serges, which had been issued two days before the advance."

On the evening of 31 October, news came through that Beersheba had fallen. On that day, 9 men were killed, 6 officers and 98 other ranks wounded, 4 missing, 2 shell-shocked and 2 with injuries sustained on the rough ground. On the 1 November the Battalion was moved back to Wadi Saba.

The availability of water in Beersheba had been exaggerated and it was found inadequate for the size of the force it needed to support.

Thomas died of wounds on 4 November, not on 2 November as recorded on the Lynsted memorial,



where he is also recorded in his old Yeomanry Regiment. None of Thomas's service records have survived so it is unclear how much medical attention he received in the four days prior to his death.

Thomas's death was reported in the East Kent Gazette on 24 November 1917:

**SITTINGBOURNE CO-OPERATIVE EMPLOYEE DIES IN PALESTINE
PRIVATE THOMAS QUAIFE, THE BUFFS.**

Official news has been received of the death in Palestine, from wounds received in action on November 4th, of Private Thomas Quaife, aged 27, of the East Kent Mounted Rifles, attached to the Buffs. Thomas Quaife, who was single, was a native of Cranbrook. But for many years he was employed in the boot department of the Sittingbourne Co-operative Society's Stores, East Street. He joined the East Kent Yeomanry in 1915, and at the time he died he had for 18 months served in the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, in which he had been attached to one of the battalions of the Buffs. Thomas Quaife was in action in Beersheba on October 31st, and presumably he received his fatal wounds in the attack on Gaza. The young man was much liked by his fellow employees, and he is one more of the young fellows in the service of the Sittingbourne Co-operative Society who have nobly laid down their lives for King and Country. The deceased was the brother of Private Frank William Quaife (a member of the Sittingbourne Postal Staff), who is now serving in a Labour Company of the Essex Regiment, and is billeted at 13 Hackney Road, Maidstone.

Thomas is buried in Kantara War Memorial Cemetery in Egypt in grave number E.41. Kantara was a major base and hospital centre, and the cemetery was established in February 1916 for burials of those who died in various hospitals. Post Armistice, the cemetery was extended to enable bodies to be exhumed from cemeteries and battlefields around Rumani, Qatia, El Arish and Rafa, and reburied. It is likely that Thomas's was one of the graves that was exhumed and reburied.



Kantara War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt

Thomas was posthumously awarded the British War and the Victory medals. [See Appendix 1]

In March 1918 Thomas's brother, Frank, received his owed pay of £6 9s 7d (£6.48p). In December 1919 he also received his War Gratuity of £11 10s 0d (£11.50p). [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £980 in today's money.



In 1921, money was raised for trees to be planted in what is now known as the Avenue of Remembrance in Sittingbourne. Each tree was dedicated to one of the fallen from Sittingbourne, including Thomas.

Sadly, the original trees were removed when the surrounding area was regenerated. In 1996 Swale Borough Council, J Sainsbury PLC and Save our Living Memorial, with cooperation of the Royal British Legion Ex-Servicemen Association, planted new trees.

Thomas's tree sits close to the junction of the Avenue of Remembrance and Bell Road.







Gunner 915504, "D" Battery, 223 Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

Died of wounds 10 November 1917 Aged 23

Confusingly, Reginald was registered at birth as "Frank Reginald" in December 1894 and christened the same on 16 January 1895 in Teynham Church. Thereafter, Frank is registered as "Reginald Frank" in census data and military records.

Reginald was born in Greenstreet, Teynham, and was one of the 11 children of Abraham and Amy (née Kensley). Reginald's older siblings were Percy William¹, Archibald², Mildred Kate, Violet Ethel and Edith Nora, and younger siblings Hilda Winifred, John Maxwell, Cuthbert Eric and Sybil Irene. In 1900 another daughter was born but died only hours old. His father was a self-employed carpenter and fencer and Reginald would eventually work alongside his father in the business.

Although born on the Teynham side of Greenstreet, he would live the majority of his short life on the Lynsted side. The house no longer exists but it would have been situated near the entrance to the Coffin Path on London Road.

We know that he enlisted in Sittingbourne in February 1915. As conscription was not yet in place, he was obviously a volunteer. However, we have no evidence that his service records survived. Although we have no concrete details of Reginald's service, we are able to tell his story via the Regimental records and war diaries of "D" Bty 223rd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery (RFA).

The records show that Reginald's regiment was first mobilised on 1 July 1916, leaving Heytesbury, Wiltshire, for embarkation from Southampton. It comprised 32 Officers and 809 ORs; 664 Horses (176 Riding; 196 Light Draught; 292 Medium). The RFA were responsible for medium calibre guns and Howitzers. "C" Battery suffered the first casualty of the 223rd Brigade on the day they disembarked at Le Havre, when Dr Waller fell off his horse and broke his leg.

As they arrived in France, it appears there were only three Batteries ("A", "B" and "C"). They were first located in Bryas (Brias) and Grossart, securing and loading ammunition, and officers attending briefings on cooperation between artillery and aeroplanes. On 12 April, they moved 5 kilometres eastwards to La Thieuloy, Bully Grenay and Barlin.

On 18 July, at Barlin the records note:

"From this day, Howitzer battery (late "A" Battery, 223rd Brigade) attached to this Brigade."

Then, on 19 July:

"R.N.D.A.O. (Royal Navy Division Artillery Officer) 19 number of Brigade changed from 318th to 225th."

On 31 July, the number of the Brigade again changed from 225 to 223 Brigade.

The brigade's next casualties also were again the result of an accident when, on 1 August 1916, at

¹Reginald's older brother, Percy, died aged 18 in 1901, while serving as a private in the 10th Hussars, following hospitalisation in St James's Hospital, Woolwich. Percy is buried in Teynham Churchyard.

²His other older brother, Archibald, served in the Royal Navy in both World Wars and died while stationed at HMS Pembroke, the Naval land base at Chatham, while on active service on 30 June 1942. At the time of his death his rank was Chief Stoker. He is buried in the Lynsted Church Extension Churchyard along with their sister Edith Nora.



Aix-Noulette, when a Gunner shot his finger off through careless handling of his rifle. This event inflicted wounds to a Sergeant and one other man. All the men were taken to an Advance Dressing Station but only one was fit to return to duty.

During August, the Battery were chiefly involved in day and night harassing and searching fire on tracks and roads in the Brigade Zone; destruction of trenches in Brigade Zone by 4.5" howitzers; retaliation on enemy trench mortars; gas bombardments; registration of new targets and sniping of working parties.

The Brigade added to its strength at the end of August when "A" Battery 316 Brigade and one section of "B" Battery 316 were transferred to the 223 Brigade.

The Brigade gained experience by visiting battery positions near Mesnil on 18 October, immediately suffering casualties, losing 1 and injuring 2 more with eight horses lost belonging to "A" Battery. Also, 370 horses were withdrawn to Famechon to alleviate congestion at Wagon Lines.

With winter in prospect, increasing efforts turned to hardening defence of gun-pits and erection of Nissen huts and horse standings at the Brigade wagon lines. Orders were also issued that each Battery should prepare and care-take alternative positions that might be occupied at short notice. The idea being that enemy counter attacks would be more difficult and ammunition would be turned over regularly.

The Brigade was ordered "out of the line" on 30 November 1916, withdrawing by stages to Grand Laviers. But sadly Reginald's Battery suffered its first losses on 31 November 1916 when 2 sergeants were killed by gas shells.

Early in 1917, the Brigade moved batteries into positions near Thiepval and just South of the River Ancre (HQ in Authuille). Here they gained more experience of practice barrages to disrupt German working parties. The RFA also began to explore the use of "106 Fuses" in their shells as it was found "that this Fuse in conjunction with 18-pound Heavy Explosive forms a most valuable projectile for wire cutting, as well as for general man-killing and wood searching."

The Brigade would take part in the First and Second Battles of the Scarpe, including the capture of Guemappe during the Arras Offensive.

Moving to the latter part of 1917, in early October, Reginald was in the area of Poelcappelle, Belgium, the Brigade was at Frevin Capelle early in October. On the 8 October, instructions were received that the Divisional Artillery would move from the First Army to join its Division in the Fifth Army.

As we get closer to the action in which Reginald received his fatal wounds, the war diary reports:

Date	Operations
10/11 Oct 1917	Units entrained at Savy according to time table, and detrained at Poperinghe. After detrainment Brigade HQ and Batteries marched to Wagon Lines as under:- A.28.c.5.7. (de Zon Cabaret). HQ, "C" and "D"/223 on <u>West side</u> of Poperinghe-Elverdineghe Road. "A" and "B"/223 on East side of the Road.
18/19 Oct	Much difficulty was experienced in preparing all the Battery positions near St Julien, owing to the wet state of the ground, and the heavy counter battery work, and shelling of roads and tracks by the enemy. There was also a lack of cover for personnel at the gun positions. In spite of this, very successful efforts were made by the Batteries of the



Date	Operations
18/19 Oct Cont	Group to get up their full complement of guns, and sufficient ammunition for the Operations timed to take place on 22 October.
22 Oct	<p>5.35 a.m.: The Group took part in barrage to cover attack as per instructions in 9 Divisional Artillery Operation Order No.162.</p> <p>The Brigade had by this time 17 18-pounders and 5 Howitzers in action. (Total for Group – 18-pounders, 35; 4.5" Howitzers, 6). All the Batteries were heavily shelled during the Operation. Four of the Howitzers of "D"/223 were put out of action, but the personnel, in a most praiseworthy manner continued to work the one remaining gun, until ordered to cease fire.</p> <p>"A", "B", and "D"/223 Batteries were ordered by H.Q. 9 Divisional Artillery to be 'Silent Batteries', and had not to fire in case of an S.O.S."</p>
25 Oct	<p>Bombardment continued, also work on positions, salving guns, and drawing up ammunition.</p> <p>12 noon: The Group came under orders of H.Q. 63rd (R.N.) Divisional Artillery Operation Order no.120 (B,C,D/317 and "A", "B", "C" and "D"/223 firing).</p> <p>Firing was kept up during the day as situation demanded. The barrage was reported to have been quite satisfactory. "B"/223 suffered several casualties from enemy fire, but the other Batteries fortunately escaped any severe losses. S.O.S. Lines at the end of the day were from V.28.a.17.80 to V.21.c.55.10.</p>
28 Oct	<p>6.30 a.m.: Under instructions contained in 63rd (R.N.) Divisional Artillery Operation Order No.124 a further 48 hours bombardment was commenced. (B, C and D/317 and A, B, C, and D/223 took part).</p> <p>The Headquarters of the Brigade were relieved in the line by H.Q. 317 Brigade, R.F.A. who took over administration of No.4 Group.</p> <p>9.0 a.m.: The Group Commander (Lt. Col. W.E. Wingfield, D.S.O.) checked the S.O.S. barrage of the Batteries.</p>
29 Oct	<p>Bombardment continued. Batteries were ordered that they must have 1,300 rounds per 18-pounder and 800 rounds per 4.5" Howitzers at the guns by the morning of 30th. Arrangements were made accordingly.</p> <p>Under instructions from Divisional Artillery, H.Q., C/223 Battery were relieved in action by A/291 Battery, at 6.0 a.m. C/223 were accommodated at the Brigade Wagon Lines.</p>
30 Oct	The attack was resumed by 63 rd (R.N.) Divisional Artillery Operation Order No.127, and Batteries of the Group put up a barrage as ordered. (For details of work carried out by Batteries from 29 to 31 see War Diary of 317 th Brigade, R.F.A.).
31 Oct	10.30 pm The Wagon Lines of the Brigade were bombed by hostile aeroplanes. Casualties inflicted were, 1 man killed, 6 wounded, 7 horses killed and 33 wounded.



During these operations one Military Cross and 4 Military Medals were awarded to men of "D"/223 Battery.

The Brigade continued in action near St Julien during November, and along with 317th Brigade, RFA, constituted No 4 Group of Right Divisional Artillery, II Corps. The Group was under administration of its own Divisional Artillery HQ from 1 November to 10am, 5 November, when HQ 1st (Imperial) Divisional Artillery took over. The latter remained in Command until 23 November, when they were relieved by HQ 32nd Divisional Artillery.

The HQ of this Brigade, under Lieut Colonel W E Wingfield, DSO, was in Command of No 4 Group from 6 am on 8 November to 10am on 19 November. During the remainder of the month the Group was under the command of HQ, 317th Brigade, RFA.

Group HQ, battery positions and wagon lines remained the same as in October up to the night 16/17 November, when three batteries of the Group moved to advanced positions in the Stroombeek Valley.

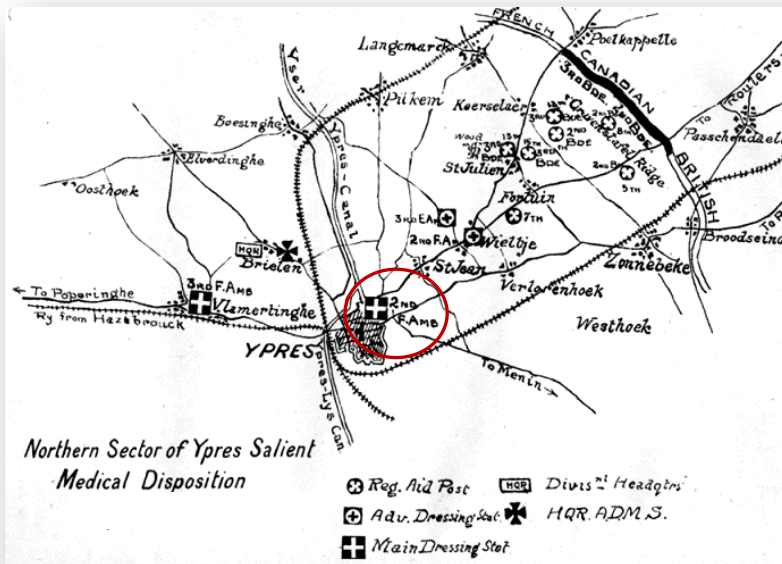
The operations in which the batteries were engaged during the month were chiefly heavy bursts of fire directed on hostile main lines of resistance and on forward lines of resistance. Zero hours and targets for the bursts were detailed by the HQ Divisional Artillery, and were of varying intensity and duration. Harassing fire on enemy roads and approaches and selected targets was also carried out each night, periods and targets being detailed from HQ Divisional Artillery.

There is no information that enables us to identify when Reginald received his wounds, but the last few days of his life included the actions noted in this extract from the war diary:

Date	Operations
1-5 November 1917	Batteries carried out registration and calibration, also barrages etc, detailed by H.Q. 63 rd (R.N.) Divisional Artillery. 4 th : 2/Lieut. C.G. Wilson posted from H.Q. to A/223 Battery.
6 (8am) - 9 November	"C"/223 Battery relieved "A"/317 Battery in action. Barrages as detailed in 1 st Divisional Artillery Operation Orders Nos. 11 and 12, and night harassing fire carried out by Batteries. 7 th November: Lt. A.R. Muir, "B"/223 died of wounds (gas).
10 November	6.5 a.m.: Batteries took part in barrage to cover attack by Infantry of 1 st (Imperial) Division, and as detailed in 1 st . Divisional Artillery Operation Order No.13 dated 8.11.17.
11-15 November	Batteries carried out bursts of fire and night firing as detailed by H.Q. 1 st Divisional Artillery. 13 th November, 9 a.m.: "A"/317 Battery relieved "A"/223 Battery in action. The 18-pounder Batteries of the Group were rested in turn during the month, the period of rest being 7 days.

Poignantly the war diary starts a report noting the number of casualties during these actions. "Casualties in action: Killed or Died of Wounds, 1 Officer.....". The diary remains incomplete.

Reginald died of wounds, caused by shellfire, in the 2nd Corps Main Dressing Station just outside Ypres on 10 November 1917.



On 24 November 1917, the Faversham and North East Kent News published the following:

GUNNER R. F. GILBERT, R.F.A.

Another Lynsted man killed is Gunner Reginald Frank Gilbert, R.F.A., son of Mr. Abraham Gilbert, of Greenstreet. He joined up in January 1915, and had been at the Front for almost two years. He was home for a few days during the past summer. News of his death was received last week by his father, a chaplain writing: "Your brave son was killed in action on the 9th. [sic]" Other letters were received from one of the officers and a comrade. Gunner Gilbert was 23 years of age, and he was formerly in Lynsted Choir. Another son of Mr Gilberts has been serving in the Navy for 11 years.

Reginald was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory Medals. [See Appendix 1]

In March 1918, his father received the money owed amounting to £12 8s 11d (£8.44½p). In November 1918 he also received the War Gratuity of £13. [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £1,335 in today's money.



Reginald Frank GILBERT

Reginald is buried in Duhallow Advanced Dressing Station (ADS) Cemetery, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, Grave Ref: III.B.8. Duhallow is believed to be named after a Southern Irish hunt and lies 1.6 kilometres north of Ypres.



Duhallow ADS Cemetery photographs courtesy of Paul and Karen Fawcett

Reginald's death coincided with the last day of the 3rd Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele).



In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

By Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, MD (1872-1918)

Canadian Army



© Keble College, Oxford University

William Allan Sewell (see opposite)



Lieutenant, 2/4th (Cumberland and Westmorland) Battalion (Territorial),

Border Regiment

Attached to 7 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps

Killed in action 12 November 1917 Aged 23

William (known as Allan, and now referred to as such) was born in Lynsted Vicarage on 5 February 1894 and christened in Lynsted Church on 4 March. He was the sixth child and youngest son of Reverend Thomas Jackson Sewell MA, the vicar of Lynsted, and Augusta Cecilia (née Taylor). Allan's five elder siblings were, Clarence John Threlkeld (known as Keldie), who predeceased him, Arthur Taylor, Thomas Jackson Elliott (known as Elliott), Frederick Charles (known as Charles), and Margaret Cecilia. His two younger siblings were Veronica Mary and Hannah Dorothy. Thomas also served in WW1 in the Royal Garrison Artillery, was wounded and awarded the Military Cross.

Reverend Sewell was originally from Kirkby Stephen in Cumbria, and, with his two brothers had entered the Church. A graduate of Queen's College, Oxford and, prior to becoming vicar of Lynsted on 18 July 1891, had been a curate at St Mary's Church, Faversham. It appears that, although a charming man, Allan's was a strict authoritarian Victorian father. He was considered at home to be severe sometimes, it seems more so after the death of his eldest son Keldie. He was ambitious for all his children teaching each of them up to secondary school age and the younger ones beyond that. But the family also had a lot of fun walking and cycling for miles around the Kentish countryside. We are told that Allan was the most fun of all the brothers being a bit of an adventurer. A short piece on his siblings is included at the end of this biography.

Allan entered Keble College, Oxford, in the Michaelmas Term of 1913 and became a member of the University Officers' Training Corps. He enlisted in the army as Private 2221, 4th (Cumberland and Westmorland) Battalion (Territorial), Border Regiment, this being the local regiment of his family. The battalion moved to Sittingbourne in September 1914 and it is probable that Allan enlisted there while home from Oxford for the summer. On the outbreak of war, Keble College transformed itself into an Officer Training Unit and it is likely this is where he undertook his officer training. On 10 November 1914, he took up his commission and became a 2nd Lieutenant.

Allan would now have joined the newly formed 2/4 Battalion in Blackpool, where training began in earnest. Training comprised route marching, musketry, bayonet fighting and night operations. According to the battalion war diary there were problems. Although all these tasks were "enthusiastically tackled", this in spite of "the shortage of rifles and equipment, which proved the most serious obstacle to training, the shortage of rifles especially relating to musketry training". The battalion also undertook shore-patrol due to increased activity of German U-boats in the area.

In January 1915 the battalion was called to proceed to France. This order was then cancelled and, in February 1915, the battalion asked for volunteers to sail for service in Burma. Every man volunteered, including those too young to serve overseas.

On 3 March 1915 the battalion left Blackpool for Avonmouth at which time their eventual destination was again changed. Allan sailed from Avonmouth for India on 4 March 1915.

Hours later, just after midnight, the HMT Dongola collided with an anchored Belgian steamer in the



Bristol Channel, being holed below the waterline forward on the starboard side. The troops, stores and equipment were transferred to HMT Tunisian and on 7 March they continued on their journey only to have to stop engines and turn off lights outside the harbour due to the presence of a German U-boat. Just before midnight they were able to move but, on the point of sailing, there was an electrical fire. Thankfully this was put out by the crew. The following day the battalion suffered its first casualty when an officer on board died of meningitis and was buried at sea.

On 31 March, the ship docked in Bombay and troops were entrained to Poona. The battalion was still in need of training, especially in musketry. Therefore, it was not until 12 November that Allan's "B" Company proceeded to Kirkee as a relief detachment. Then on 30 November, they headed to Fort Allahabad.

In January 1916, the battalion proceeded to Shankargarh for company training. Early March saw Allan move to Peshawar, where he would remain encamped opposite the Punjabi lines until the beginning of May when they moved into barracks. Here the battalion remained, undertaking escort duties and standing in reserve, until 30 November, when they moved into camp near Taikal Cemetery. It was here, on 2 November 1916, Allan was made Temporary Lieutenant.

Early in 1917, the battalion proceeded to Bara for the "Kitchener Test". This was considered, even by the regular soldiers, the severest test a British soldier could face. It was undertaken by all ranks after a period of physical and technical training. Consisting of 3 days of simulated actions of war, on iron rations (a small amount of emergency food), with each element of the test scored:

1. Battalion march 15 miles with 100 rounds ammunition followed by attack on a position. 200 marks.
2. Scouting and outpost duty day and night. 300 marks.
3. Attack and defence of position. 800 marks.
4. Duties of bivouac. 150 marks.
5. Night operations. 150 marks.
6. Rear-guard, 10 miles. 150 marks.
7. Transport duties. 120 marks.
8. Physical condition. 100 marks.
9. Miscellaneous duties. 80 marks.

Marks to be deducted for:

1. Deduction of 1 mark for every man falling out between elements 1 to 6.
2. If Third Class Shots exceed 12%, minus 10 marks for each %-age increase.
3. If men continuously hospitalised for alcoholism or "general disease" exceeds 10 in 1000, 5 points were deducted for each 1 per 1000 excess.

In addition, there were additional points available through extra competitions, such as football, or tests. There was considerable rivalry between battalions/regiments and a Board of Officers decided the eventual winners and presented the cups and trophies.

With the conclusion of their training, the battalion was now mobilised, along with the 5th Gurkhas, to Sadar Garhi to relieve the Durham Light Infantry on the Mohmand Blockade Line. Here the Blockhouses came under frequent attack and sniping. But Allan's time with his battalion was coming to an end.

We have already learned that Allan was a bit of an adventurer, so it is perhaps not surprising that he set his sights on becoming a pilot. On 30 April 1917, he reported for flying instruction in Royal Flying Corps Training School at Aboukir, Egypt. He returned to England from the Middle-East on 26 June



Royal Aircraft Factory RE8

1917 and undertook more training. He was appointed to the rank of Lieutenant (Flying Officer) on 19 September 1917.

But his career as a pilot was tragically short-lived. On 7 November, Allan was formally attached to 7 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps. On the same day he was entrained to France, then on to Belgium where he

joined his squadron who were based at Proven West Air Field, arriving on 10 November. Just 2 days later, on 12 November, Allan was piloting Royal Aircraft Factory RE8 No.2255, a British two-seat biplane reconnaissance and bomber aircraft. With him was his Observer, 20 year old 2nd Lieutenant Spencer Leslie Hatton Symonds, from Badwell Ash, Suffolk. Lieutenant Symonds was attached to 7 Squadron from 28th (County of London) Battalion, London Regiment (Artists Rifles), and was showing Allan the lines in the Ypres Salient. A report from the French said the machine had been shot down by anti-aircraft fire and the plane crashed in no-mans-land in front of the French line. The pair were posted as missing; but on 14 November, they were confirmed as being "killed in action" on 12 November 1917. Allan's Observer's body was recovered and is buried in Aeroplane Cemetery, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Allan's body was not recovered.

Allan's death was announced in The Times on 21 November 1917:

KILLED IN ACTION:

SEWELL - Killed in action, on the 12th Nov., **WILLIAM ALLAN SEWELL**, Lieutenant, Border Regiment, attached R.F.C., formerly of Keble College, Oxford, youngest son of the **Rev. T.J. and Mrs Sewell, of Lynsted Vicarage, near Sittingbourne**, aged 23 years.

On 24 November 1917, an article in the Faversham and North East Kent News reported how he met his death during an orientation flight:

ROLL OF HONOUR.

AIRMAN SON OF VICAR OF LYNSTED KILLED.

We have again to record this week the loss of a number of local men, including several more belonging to the Teynham and Lynsted district, amongst these being one of three sons of the Vicar of Lynsted serving in H.M. Forces.

2nd LIEUT. W.A. SEWELL, BORDER REGT. (ATTACHED R.F.C.)


The death of 2nd Lieut. William Allan Sewell, Border Regt. (attached



Royal Flying Corps) tragically occurred last week only a few days after his arrival on the Western Front. He was 23 years of age, and the youngest son of the Rev. T.J. Sewell, Vicar of Lynsted, and Mrs. Sewell. When war broke out he had been a year at Keble College, Oxford, where he was reading for mathematical honours, and had been in the O.T.C. during his residence there. He would have enlisted at once, but temporary conditions of health prevented, and he had reluctantly to wait a couple of months. In November (1914) he got his commission, and in the following March went out to India where he was in action in connection with the Mohmand Rising. Later, when volunteers were wanted for the Royal Flying Corps, he volunteered, and in February of this year proceeded to a Flying School in Egypt where he remained until June. He then came back to England, and after being stationed at various home stations, went out to France on the 7th of the present month. On the 12th, only five days later, he met his death. He had gone up with his observer to be shown the lines when his machine was attacked by enemy aircraft and fell in no man's land. On Thursday, the 15th, his parents received the news that he was "missing," this being followed by a further telegram on Friday stating that he was "killed in action." His Commanding Officer, who has since written, says "although he was only here a short time he had already made us feel that he was a great acquisition to the squadron." During a training flight some time back the deceased's machine fell and he had a very narrow escape. Had he been a hundred yards higher he might have succeeded in pulling the machine up, but he hadn't that margin, and it came to the ground. By the skilful grounding which he effected, however, he escaped with nothing worse than a severe shaking. Deceased also had an experience when leaving for India early in 1915. Soon after the vessel left port it was rammed and the effort to beach it was only just successful. In India deceased did very useful work in the Border Regiment. Mr and Mrs Sewell's third son, 2nd Lieut. Elliot [sic] Sewell, is in the R.G.A., and their fourth son, Charles, is in the R.F.A. The latter is suffering from "trench foot".

Allan's death was also announced in the 29 November 1917 issue of "Flight and the Aircraft Engineer" magazine:

Flight, November 29, 1917.



First Aero Weekly in the World.
Founder and Editor: STANLEY SPOONER.

A Journal devoted to the Interests, Practice, and Progress of Aerial Locomotion and Transport.
OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE ROYAL AERO CLUB OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

No. 466. (No. 48, Vol. IX.) NOVEMBER 29, 1917. [Weekly, Price 3d. Post Free, 4d.]

Lieutenant WILLIAM ALLAN SEWELL, Border Regiment, attached R.F.C., formerly of Keble College, Oxford, who was killed in action on November 12th, aged 23, was the youngest son of the Rev. T. J. and Mrs. Sewell, of Lynsted Vicarage, near Sittingbourne.

In addition to the Lynsted Memorial, Allan is commemorated on the Arras Flying Services Memorial, Pas de Calais, and on the Roll of Honour at Keble College, Oxford.



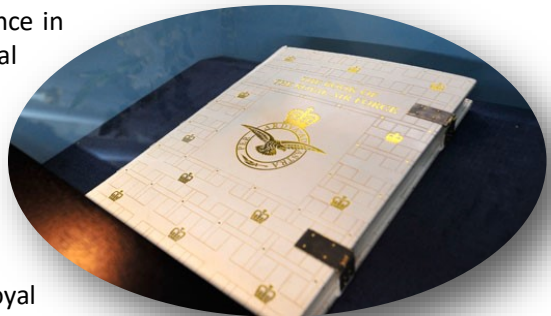
Arras Flying Services Memorial



Keble College, Oxford Memorial Plaque

Photograph courtesy of Marc Stewart

Allan's name also appears in the book of remembrance in St Clement Danes Church, Westminster, the central church of the Royal Air Force. Here are recorded all the names of those killed between 1911 and the present day. He appears in Book 1 (of 10) on the left nearest to the altar. Those who appear in this book pre-date the RAF and include the names of balloonists who served with the Royal Engineers, members of the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps and RAF personnel killed up to the outbreak of the Second World War.





Allan is remembered on the grave of his parents and older brother Clarence, in Lynsted Churchyard extension. The inscription reads:

*Also in proud and loving memory of their
youngest son*

*Lieut. William Allan Sewell of Keble College,
Oxford*

*Who, after two years active service with the
Border Regiment in India, desiring to share the
greatest danger, joined the Royal Flying Corps
and was killed in action Nov. 12th 1917
in Houthulst Forest, Belgium.*



Allan was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1]

All of Allan's siblings led a life dedicated to church or education. A short biography of Allan's siblings follows:



The Reverend Clarence John Threlkeld (Keldie) Sewell was born on 23 April 1884 in Peterborough, where his father was assistant master at The King's School. Clarence was educated at Winchester College and in 1904 went on to Trinity College Cambridge where he was an outstanding student, being elected to an Abbott Scholarship. In 1906 he was bracketed with a Mr Arunachala Tyaga Rajan as Senior Wrangler (the top mathematics undergraduate at Cambridge University, a position regarded as "the greatest intellectual achievement attainable in Britain"). In the following year he was placed in the first-class of the Mathematical Tripos, Part II.

In preparation for Holy Orders, Clarence went to Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxfordshire, the largest Church of England clergy training centre. He was ordained in



1910 by the Bishop of Chichester (Dr Ridgeway), with a title to Lancing College, where he was an assistant master.

Sadly, Clarence suffered from diabetes in the days before insulin had been discovered, and on Sunday 17 March 1912, Clarence died at home in Lynsted Vicarage, aged just 27. He is buried in Lynsted Churchyard Extension.

Reverend Arthur Taylor Sewell was born on 23 December 1886 in Smarden, Kent. Like his older brother he was educated at Winchester College and studied Divinity at Bishops' College, Cheshunt. Arthur suffered from being in the shadow of his brilliant elder brother.

In 1925, he married teacher Lucy Ann Marjorie Partridge in Worcester. They had one daughter, Anne who served as a nun in Wantage Convent for 60 years. Arthur served as Vicar at Dundry and Long Ashton, Somerset. He died in Wantage in 1970.

Thomas Jackson Elliott Sewell (known as Elliott) was born in Faversham, where his father was then the Curate, on 25 October 1888. He was educated at Rugby School from Sept 1902 to 1907, and went on to read Mathematics at Queens' College, Cambridge (like his brother before him, he was an Abbott Scholar).

He served as an Assistant Master at Giggleswick School from 1910 to 1911. He then went on to become House Master and Senior Assistant Master at South Lodge Preparatory School, Lowestoft, in 1912.

His time at Lowestoft was interrupted by WW1, when he took up his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in 122nd Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery (Special Reserve). He joined his regiment in Contalmaison on the Somme in September 1916.

Elliott was promoted to Lieutenant on 28 March 1918 and mentioned in despatches on 17 May 1918. He was awarded the Military Cross, on 26 July 1918, when serving as Acting Captain. The citation reads:

'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during an enemy attack, when he fought his section nearly all day under a heavy bombardment, and until he was subjected to severe machine-gun fire from the flank and rear, and had suffered heavy casualties. He then destroyed his guns, only abandoning the attempt to save them in consequence of the loss of so many horses. His cool and intrepid behaviour throughout was up to the best traditions of the regiment.'

Although already serving as an Acting Captain from 28 September to 6 October 1918, he was raised to Acting Major.

Just 5 days before the Armistice, on 6 November 1918, Elliott was wounded in action, receiving a shoulder wound when commanding a forward section of 60 pounders at St. Waast, near Bavai, Northern France. On 3 May 1919, he was placed on the retired list on account of ill-health caused by wounds and given the rank of Captain.

Elliott returned home to his teaching and in 1923 bought South Lodge Preparatory School, Lowestoft, and served as Headmaster. On 2 June he married Elisabeth Georgina Bower, also a teacher, in Huddersfield. They went on to have 3 children. Elisabeth died on 8 January 1945 aged 52.

Elliott oversaw the move of the school, and the change of name, to "Old Buckenham Hall" in South West Norfolk in 1937. Being positioned safely away from air raids, in WW2 it became a refuge for evacuees and a larger intake of boys. During his time as headmaster, the school celebrated its



centenary and it celebrated its 150th anniversary just a few years ago. Elliott retired in 1967 and was succeeded as Headmaster by his youngest child, Donald. Elliott died in Sudbury near Brettenham, Suffolk in 1972 on 11 November, Armistice Day.

Reverend Frederick Charles Sewell was born in Faversham in December 1890 and christened by his father on 12 January 1891. Academic success was rated very highly in the family he found life difficult, not being of that bent. After missing out on a university place he left for Melbourne, Australia on 11 February 1920, embarking on the *Ulysses* from Glasgow.

In 1922 he is recorded as being a “student” at St Peter’s Church, Oxley, Queensland. In 1925 he was appointed an assistant curate at Christ Church, Milton, then curate at Ithaca. On 2 February 1926 Fredrick married Mabel Eveline Boldero. They had no children.

His records show an itinerant lifestyle, moving between Gin Gin, Griffiths, Kedron, Ithaca, Auchenflower, Toowoomba and West End - all in Queensland and mainly around Brisbane. This was because Frederick had become part of “The Order of Witness”, also known as “The Bush Brotherhood”. This was a radical experiment within the Anglican church where they sought to reach the railway construction and mining camps, and the families in the new soldier and immigrant settlements. Bishop Halford had resigned as Bishop of Brisbane and established this order of priests, who lived very simply and were prepared to be sent to live in the camps. The Bush Brothers took a temporary vow of poverty, chastity and obedience. They were either single or had to leave their wives behind during their period of service. They would make periodic returns from the bush to a community house for spiritual replenishment. Their duties included giving religious instruction in schools, holding services and administering sacraments.

In 1948, Bishop Halford died and his obituary notes that, at the time of his death, only one member of the order remained in Queensland, the Rev. F. C. Sewell, then rector of St. Peter’s, West End.

On 19 June 1951, he returned to England with Mabel on the “*SS Orcades*” to visit his family, staying with his brother, Elliott. Records show that they returned to Australia and, in 1959, he is recorded as being Rector in Kedron, Queensland.

Margaret Cecilia Sewell was born in Lynsted Vicarage on 25 June 1892 and christened in Lynsted Church on 24 August the same year. Educated at Cheltenham Ladies College and Cambridge University, she gained an MA in mathematics. Margaret went on to be the Headmistress of Twickenham County School, then St Mary’s School, Waverley, Johannesburg, South Africa. She did not marry and died in Nairobi, Kenya, where she was assistant mistress at Kenya High School, on 28 September 1943, aged 51.

Veronica Mary Sewell was born in Lynsted Vicarage on 29 November 1896 and christened in Lynsted Church on New Year’s Eve. Veronica was home-schooled and during the First World War taught in various preparatory schools. After the war, with coaching from her elder sister, she won a scholarship to Newnham College, Cambridge University, and in 1924 graduated with a BA in mathematics. She enjoyed a successful career as a teacher, ending with 20 years as Head of the Mathematics Department of Wycombe Abbey School. Veronica married solicitor Edwin Ashworth Briggs on 30 April 1927. She died in 1986.

Hannah Dorothy Sewell was born in Lynsted Vicarage on 2 January 1900 and was christened in Lynsted church on 8 February. Hannah became a Sister of Mercy in the Home of the Holy Rood, an Anglican Convent in Worthing. She died in 1984.



The Society is indebted to Katharine, Allan's niece, daughter of his sister Veronica, for her invaluable assistance in providing a glimpse into the life of the older generation of the Sewell Family.



East Kent Gazette 24 November 1917:

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR SERVICE MEN.

Ever since the war broke out the residents of the parishes of Teynham and Lynsted have most faithfully discharged a duty – that of sending a Christmas gift to every soldier or sailor belonging to those two parishes, whether serving at home or aboard. At first the numbers were few, but this year something like 300 men will have a parcel. Funds, administered by a joint committee, have been again got together, and by reference to our advertising columns it will be seen that all residents of Teynham and Lynsted who have near relatives serving are asked to supply their names at once to the Hon. Secretary of the Committee, Mr. R. Gilbert Eascott, of The Pharmacy, Greenstreet. The former secretary, Mr. H.A.J Peasnell, is now himself a soldier, and is serving in Egypt.

Private, G/6289

"D" Company, 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

Killed in action 2 December 1917 Aged 22

Sydney (sometimes incorrectly recorded as Sidney), was born at 54 Greenstreet, Lynsted, in 1895 to James, a self-employed plumber, painter and ironmonger, and mother Alice Maud (née Rickard). James was previously widowed on the death of his first wife Frances Loader, with whom he had three children: Henry James, a plumber, painter and journeyman, Florence and Edgar Charles, a painter's apprentice. As well as these three elder step-siblings, Sydney had a younger full sister, Annie Maud Victoria.

Sadly, on 8 June 1905 Sydney's father died. At the time of the 1911 Census his eldest step-brother, Henry, was now head of the household. Sydney was working as an apprentice shipwright.

On 27 April 1913, Sydney's mother married Edwin Hadlow and, along with Sydney, moved to Uplands Farm, Dargate.

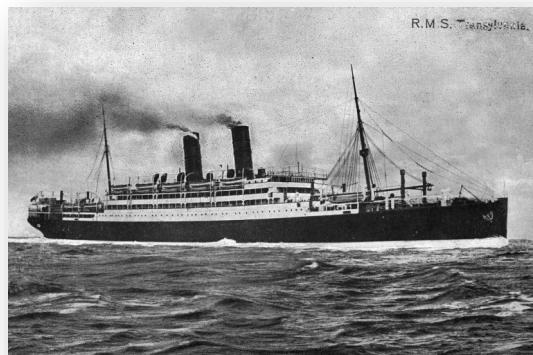
At the time of Sydney's death he is recorded as serving in 1st Battalion, The Buffs. However, it appears that he started his active service with the 2nd Battalion, being the only battalion of The Buffs to see action in Salonika.

The service records for Sydney are not available, but we know that he enlisted in Faversham in June 1915, and, after a few months training, was posted to France on Tuesday, 5 October 1915. At this time the 2nd Battalion, The Buffs, was recovering from a hard experience at the Battle of Loos, where they suffered huge losses. Drafts arrived from England on 2, 3, 9, and 15 October to enable them to come back to full strength. Instructional parades commenced before the battalion returned to the trenches on 17 October.

Sydney's time in France was to be very short-lived. The Historical Records of The Buffs explains:

.....on 21 October startling orders arrived: no less than instructions to entrain on the following day for Marseilles for conveyance to the East.

No time was lost. On 22 the battalion marched to Fonquereuil, near Bethune, entrained there, arrived at the great port at 1.30p.m. on Sunday 24, and at 4pm embarked, complete with transport, animals, vehicles and all, on the troopship Transylvania¹ for conveyance to Egypt.



¹On May 3 1917, the Transylvania sailed from Marseille to Alexandria with a full complement of troops, escorted by the Japanese destroyers Matsu and Sakaki. The following day it was struck in the port engine room by a torpedo fired by the German U-boat U-63 under the command of Otto Schultze. At the time the ship was about 2.5 miles (2.2 nmi; 4.0 km) south of Cape Vado near Savona, in the Gulf of Genoa. The Matsu came alongside the Transylvania and began to take on board troops while the Sakaki circled to force the submarine to remain submerged. Twenty minutes later a second torpedo was seen coming straight for the Matsu, which saved herself by going astern at full speed. The torpedo hit the Transylvania instead, which sank immediately. Ten crew members, 29 army officers and 373 soldiers lost their lives.



Twenty-seven officers and 907 other ranks reached Alexandria on 30 October and marched to Sidi Bishr Camp.....The stay in Egypt was a very short one and was mostly devoted to training and marching. The whole of the 28th Division had moved and were to move again, for, on 22 November, came the orders for Salonika, the new base for operations against the Bulgarian forces.

However, Sydney would make it no further than Alexandria, as he contracted dysentery and was hospitalised there for three months. Following this he returned home for a further three months' convalescence.

By mid 1916, Sydney was fit to return to service. With his battalion still serving in Salonika, it is probable that it was at this time he was allocated to 1st Battalion, The Buffs, and sent to France. It is clear that Sydney's remaining service was hard, as he arrived back in service around the time of the start of the Battle of the Somme.

During July and August 1916, there were frequent reinforcements and new troops arriving from Britain, requiring the 1st Battalion to spend time in intense training in readiness for action at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette (15 - 22 September 1916), where they suffered more casualties than any other unit in the Brigade. Many men had been trapped in shell holes for hours before being able to make their way back to the line. Indeed, newspaper reports at the time of his death, make mention of how Sydney was trapped in no-mans-land for 48 hours before he could make it back to the lines.

With little rest, the battalion's next encounter was the Battle of Morval (25 - 28 September 1916), which was considered "a glorious success" but with the loss of many men. On the second day of the battle, the battalion was relieved. The battalion was sadly depleted but an extract from a letter to Sir Courtenay Vyvyan (late of the Buffs) from the Acting Adjutant General of 6th Division reads:

"Your old battalion is going very strong. It is commanded by Green, and Gould is second in command. Otherwise from that I don't suppose you would know anyone. They did splendidly in the Somme and never lost their discipline for a moment. I saw them after the fight on 13th/18th September, when they only had 314 men left, and they might have been parading for the King's birthday. It really was a magnificent sight."

After time in the trenches near Givenchy, the battalion retired to Bethune and the trenches in that vicinity. Casualties were regular. On 20 December the battalion returned to Bethune, where Sydney would spend his last Christmas.

The first few months of 1917 saw few changes for the 1st Buffs. Locations changed but they still faced time in the trenches and suffered regular casualties. Not surprisingly there were frequent and long lists of medal awards and mentions in dispatches.

The beginning of April saw the battalion called into trenches near Loos and this is where they were for the opening of the Battle of Arras (9 April – 16 May 1917). Here again they suffered heavy casualties and received many battle honours. On 20 May the battalion retired to billets but were back in trenches near Loos just two days later.

During May and the beginning of June the battalion were in and out of trenches. On 11 June, there came a week of relative rest, except for Sydney's "D" Company, who were entrained to Allouagne to train for a raid, which would take place on 24 June. The attack would be on the enemy trenches in the Hulloch sector. The aim was "to obtain identification and inflict casualties, to capture prisoners, to destroy dug-outs and emplacements, and to draw the enemy's attention from other parts of the divisional front". The raid was successful, but again at huge cost.



The next few months saw the pattern of a few days rest followed by being in the trenches. The Battalion suffered frequent losses: indeed between the months of the battles of the Somme and Arras and Sydney's death, the 1st Battalion saw almost 500 men killed and scores wounded. Replacements came from raw recruits, men who had been "patched-up" or had previously been invalided out.

At the beginning of November 1917, the battalion gained some much needed and well earned rest. We know that at this time, after many months at the front, Sydney was able to take some home leave. Sadly this would be the last time. On his return to the Western Front, preparations were underway for the Battle of Cambrai.

Early November found the 1st Battalion at Beaudricourt, joining forces with 6th Battalion, The Buffs, and taking on a small trickle of only 10 other ranks. On 7 and 8 November, the Battalion marched to witness a tank demonstration. Six tanks took part and gave the Battalion some little idea as to the part planned for tank attacks in the forthcoming "Push".

Sydney's battalion war diary tells the story of his final days:

Date	Operations
11 Nov 1917	Final of Brigade Sports. Battalion gained 2 firsts.
13 Nov	Battalion Transport moved off on 4 days march towards Perrone.
14 Nov	Increase 1 O.R.
15 Nov	Battalion entrained for Peronne, Lt Blake and 3 O.R.s joined from Divisional Wing.
16 Nov	Peronne: Battalion left Peronne and went into tents in Bois Dessart.
17-18 Nov	Peronne: Battalion moved to forward area, and were attached to 3rd Corps. Increase 3 O.R.s.
19 Nov	Peronne: Order of the day issued by Divisional Commander wishing all ranks success in the forthcoming attack.
20 Nov	Villers Pluich: Battalion moved forward to attack at dawn, co-operating with "B" Battalion tanks. The 1st Objective was the Blue Line (Main Hindenburg Line). 2nd Objective was the Brown Line (Support Hindenburg Line). The tanks advanced in line followed by the Battalion in Artillery formation and the 1st objective was soon taken. These operations were carried out and objectives taken with the small loss of 8 O.R.s Killed and 33 O.R.s Wounded.
21 Nov	Trenches: Battalion consolidating 4 O.R.s wounded.
22 Nov	Trenches: Battalion consolidating the line, Nine Wood – Ascault – River, preparing for counter-attack, 2 O.R.s Wounded, 1 O.R. Died of Wounds. On this date Captain V.N. MOSS seeing that the village of Noyelles was lightly held by the enemy, collected a few men, with two tanks and attacked the village, capturing it including 14 prisoners, and liberated about 20 French civilians.



Date	Operations
22 Nov	Noyelles: Battalion defending Noyelles.
23 Nov	Noyelles: Capt. A.F. Worster, M.C., Died of Wounds, the whole Battalion mourns for this officer. He was a universal favourite and had been with the Battalion 12 months and was awarded a bar to his Military Cross in June 1917. Lieutenants Harper and Clarke joined for duty. 10 O.R.'s Killed.
24 Nov	Noyelles: Offensive ended, 1 O.R. Killed, 6 O.R.s Wounded.
25 Nov	Noyelles: "B" Company defending Lock Bridge relieved by 87th Infantry Brigade, L.17.a.50.70., 1 O.R. Died of Wounds.
26 Nov	Noyelles: 29th Division to capture enemy line at Mont Plaisir Farm. Battalion relieved and withdrawn to Hindenburg Line. L.27.a.70.10. to be in Divisional Reserve. Lt. Col. Green, D.S.O. left Battalion to Command 10th Infantry Brigade. Major B.L. Strauss assumed temporary command.
27 Nov	Noyelles: Battalion moved to 31.d.20.50.; 1 O.R. Killed.
28-29 Nov	Noyelles: Situation unchanged.
30 Nov	Noyelles: 6 O.R.s Wounded.
31 Nov	Noyelles: 3 O.R. Reinforcements.
1 Dec	Gouzeaucourt: The battalion reinforced the troops who were holding the line round Gonnellieu and La Vaquerie where the Hun broke through on the previous day. Killed: Major B.L. Strauss (C.O.; buried at SOREL) and 7 Other Ranks; Died of Wounds: 1 O.R. Wounded: Capt. E.H. Allen (Adjutant); Captain J.R. Tibbles (R.A.M.C.); 2nd Lieut. P.R.T. Owen (L.G.O.); 2nd Lieut. P.J. Fisher; 2nd Lieut. L.F. Clark; Lieut. G.B. Blake; C.S.M.P. Vincu of "C" Company & 45 O.R. Including 1 RAMC). When Major Straus was killed in 15 Ravine, Captain Allen took command of the battalion and Lt. R.M. Webster came up from Gouzeaucourt and took over the A/Adjutancy, Captain Pill (RAMC), Medical Officer of the 8th Bedfordshire, came up and took over temporarily Medical Officer duties for us. In the evening the battalion were relieved and withdrew to Deadman's Corner and Captain Allen went to the dressing station and Major Hardy of the 2nd York & Lancasters temporarily took command of the battalion. The battalion remained at Deadman's Corner for about 2 hours and then moved back into the main Hindenburg system.
2 Dec	Gouzeaucourt: Killed: 1 O.R. (attached 16th Infantry Brigade); Wounded: 1 O.R.; Died of Wounds: 1 O.R.; Missing: 3 O.R. <u>(since reduced to one).</u>

It appears that Sydney was the “other rank” still accounted for as “missing” as, on 19 January 1918 the Faversham and North East Kent News reported:

Pte. Sidney Watts, the Buffs, youngest son of Mrs. Hadlow, of Hernhill (formerly of Greenstreet), and a brother of Mr. Harry Watts, of Greenstreet, is reported missing.

Two weeks later the newspaper reported the sad news confirming Sydney’s death:

9th February 1918

ROLL OF HONOUR

PTE. SYDNEY WATTS, THE BUFFS.

Private Sydney Arthur Watts, The Buffs, who we recently mentioned as “missing,” has since been reported killed in action on or about December 2nd. He was a son of Mrs. Edwin Hadlow, of Uplands Farm, Dargate, and a brother of Mr. Harry Watts, of Greenstreet. Deceased had been serving for two and a half years. After a few months’ training he proceeded to France but had not been there long – though long enough to get into the firing line before he was drafted to Egypt en route for Salonika. In Egypt, however, he contracted dysentery and was for three months in hospital at Alexandria. Then he came home and was convalescing in England for three months, at the end of which time he again went to France, where he was in some of the severest of the Somme fighting. On one occasion he had an exceedingly trying experience, for following a heavy engagement he was lying for forty eight hours in No Man’s Land before he was able to get back to the line. In November he came home on leave after a spell of seventeen months at the front, and it was shortly after his return that he was killed. Pte. Watts was 23 years of age and was well known in Greenstreet where the greater part of his life had been spent.

The following week, on 23 February 1918, the newspaper reported on a service held at Hernhill Church in remembrance of Sydney:

A deeply impressive service was held in Hernhill Church on Sunday afternoon, the 9th inst., in memory of the late Private Sydney A. Watts. The Rev. Alfred Clark, in the course of his address, based on the words “A good soldier of Jesus Christ,” noted how quickly the gallant young soldier had won the high regard of all who knew him, and had given a bright example of a young soldier who had shown himself a good son, a true comrade, a ready volunteer when his country needed him, and a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Handel’s Dead March “Saul” was beautifully played by Miss Foreman at the conclusion of the service.



In addition to the Lynsted memorial, Sydney is remembered on the War Memorial at St. Michael's Church, Hernhill, Kent



He is also on the Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, Nord, France, where his name appears on Panel 3. The Cambrai Memorial commemorates more than 7,000 servicemen of the United Kingdom and South Africa who died in the Battle of Cambrai in November and December 1917 and whose graves are not known.

*To the Glory of God and to the enduring memory
of 7,048 Officers and Men of the forces of the
British Empire who fell at the Battle of Cambrai 20
Nov—3 Dec 1917 but who have no known grave.
Their names are here recorded.*

Sydney was posthumously awarded the 1915 Star, the British War and Victory Medals. [See Appendix 1]

In April 1918, Sydney's mother received his money owed amounting to £9 17s 10d (£9.89p). In November 1919 she also received his War Gratuity of £11 10s (£11.50p). [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £1,200 in today's money.



Sydney was remembered by his family on the first anniversary of his death, in the East Kent Gazette, 6 December 1919 issue:

IN MEMORIAM:

WATTS: In loving memory of my loving son, Private Sydney Arthur Watts, who was killed in action, December 1st [sic], 1917, at Cambrai, France.

Not gone from memory, not gone from love,
But gone to his Father's home above.
From Mother, Brothers, and Sister.

WATTS: In loving memory of our dear Brother, Sydney Arthur Watts, who was killed on December 1st [sic], 1917.



East Kent Gazette 15 December 1917:

GREENSTREET.

LOCAL LADS WIN MILITARY MEDALS.

News has reached Greenstreet that two local lads have been awarded the Military Medal. Both these lads, who are chums, are in Palestine. The first to be mentioned is Private Harry Benstead, the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Bensted, of Devon Villas, Greenstreet. He has been granted the Military Medal for great gallantry and devotion to duty in laying and repairing wires under heavy shell fire. Young Benstead, who is an old Lynsted school boy, and was afterwards in the employ of the Sittingbourne Co-operative Society, joined the 4th Buffs early in the War. He saw service at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli, and was there at the evacuation. He was then transferred to Egypt, and lately has seen much service in Palestine.

The other lad, who is also to be congratulated, is Private George Wiles, of the East Kent Yeomanry, attached to the Buffs. This young man is the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wiles, of Claxfield, Greenstreet. He joined the Yeomanry in 1914, and was in Gallipoli when poor Sergt. Mat Dalton was killed. He was afterwards taken ill with malaria and typhoid, and was eventually sent to England for treatment. Later on he found his way back to Egypt in time for the Palestine campaign. He has been granted the Military Medal for gallantry and devotion to duty while acting as a stretcher bearer for many hours under heavy shell fire. Another brother of the winner of the Military Medal is Private Frederick Wiles, of the London Scottish.

1918

Faversham and North East Kent News 19th January 1918:

TEYNHAM AND LYNSTED MEN IN THE FORCES HOW THEIR CHRISTMAS GIFTS WERE APPRECIATED

Letters and postcards from Teynham and Lynsted men serving in His Majesty's Forces, are being received every post by Mr R G Eacott, of Greenstreet, in acknowledgement of the Christmas gifts of cigarettes which were subscribed for by the parishioners. The Communications all testify how very much the men appreciated this little remembrance from friends at home.

The despatch of the parcels, which was kindly undertaken by Mr Eacott and carried out by him with the help of Mrs Eacott and his assistant, was a pretty big task, the total number being sent being 334. This amount expended £23-8s-4d.

Men serving in the Army abroad each received fifty cigarettes (duty free), while the men in the Navy and those serving at home received twenty. The difference in the case of the naval men was due to the fact that not less than 200 could be sent duty free, and consequently the number had to be reduced in order to keep the expenditure within the amount subscribed. As it was this was slightly exceeded.

In each parcel was enclosed a card with Christmas and New Year greetings from the people of Lynsted and Teynham.

We give below extracts from the letters and cards received:-

Captain T J Elliott Sewell, R.G.A. (B.E.F.)¹, wrote: "I wish I could send through you to the kind people of Lynsted and Teynham some expressions of thanks for their message of goodwill and token of remembrance. I should like to tell them all how much I appreciate their kindness, as no doubt do all my comrades from the two parishes. If you could see me at the present moment I expect you would think me a most underserving object. I am sitting in a very comfortable old cellar in front of a fine fire in a big open fireplace that we built to-day, and the cellar is lighted excellently with electric light, which was put in for us

¹Captain T J Sewell was the son of the Vicar of Lynsted and brother of William, who had been killed in action just a few weeks before Christmas, who we commemorated earlier in this book.

Captain Sewell was promoted to Lieutenant on 28 March 1918, mentioned in despatches on 17 May 1918 and awarded the Military Cross on 26 July 1918, when serving as Acting Captain. He was wounded in the shoulder just 5 days before the Armistice. He survived the war. More of his story can be seen in William Sewell's biography.



yesterday. I need hardly say that these are not the usual conditions under which we live, and we dare not hope to enjoy such luxury for very long, though at present the battery is in action sufficiently close for it to be well worth our while to come here for periods as we have off duty. There is plenty of water in the neighbourhood, but we do not desire to have the water laid on here; we have made up our minds to endure the hardship of doing without that convenience. I had better end this letter now, or perhaps people will be driven to the conclusion that there is no war out here, but that all the privations are endured at home. Once more thanking you and those who you represent, your sincerely T.J. Sewell, Capt. R.G.A.”

J. Dalton (Somewhere in France):- “I take this opportunity of thanking the people of Teynham and Lynsted for the cigarettes I received. They are very acceptable to us all out here, and we also know that folks at home do not forget us. I hope that you all had a good Xmas in Blighty; I was lucky, under the circumstances, to get a good one. Best wishes for 1918.” *[Died of wounds, 13 December 1918, aged 20]*

J Holness:- “...Assure you your kind gift is much appreciated - a smoke means so much to us out here,. Wishing you a happy new year in which the boys here join, and hope for a speedy termination of hostilities.”

W Ford:- “...They came just right, just before I was going up the line again, and I was very pleased with them, for it is nice to get a Blighty smoke, and we still think of home.” *[Died of tuberculosis, 4 September 1919, aged 32]*

H Wyver:- “...It is good to know that friends at home remember the boys who are out here roughing it. I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you and thanking you personally.”

William Gates:- “...We can all enjoy a good smoke, especially those that come from the old home. Best wishes for the new year; hope to be with you all again before another one.”

J H Dann:- “...Cigarettes were most welcome, and I thank the friends who helped to make the fund a success. It shows that though the lads are away they are appreciated.”

W Spillett:- “...It is very good of you all to think of us boys out here. Let us hope we are able to be with you again before long.”

W. Packham:- “Thank you for the magnificent smokes; they are the best I have smoked...Let us all hope that this years is the year of victory.” *[Died of war injuries, 7 August 1920, aged 24]*

G Hadlow:- “The cigarettes have come in very nicely as I am up the line. Glad to think the people at home think of us.”

E Hodges:- “...I can assure you they are very much appreciated, and the kindly thought is not overlooked.”

S Rickwood:- “... I thank you and the people of Lynsted and Teynham. Trust we shall soon be with them again.”

G Nipper:- “...The knowledge that our friends at home still think of us greatly helps us to do our duty.”



Sergt. Mills, after expressing his thanks says "Hope to see you all soon".

H Potts:- "...I and my chums will enjoy them very much."

F A Beach:- "I think it very kind of you; they are always acceptable."

R L Whittle:- "Dear Mr Eacott. - Thanks muchly."

Others who have written briefly but cordially expressing their thanks:- W Mills, E H Kemp, J R Fagg, G W Rossiter, A F Boorman, C Dunstel, A W Jordan.

Faversham and North East Kent News 26th January 1918:

TEYNHAM AND LYNSTED MEN IN THE FORCES

SOME MORE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF THE CHRISTMAS GIFTS



We give a few more extracts from the letters and cards of Teynham and Lynsted men acknowledging the cigarettes sent at Christmastide by the parishioners:-

Gunner J T Baker:- "Best thanks for the cigarettes. I often think of the dear ones at home and wonder how everyone is getting on, and shall do so more when smoking the good old Blighty cigs. The weather is very bad out here now (Jan 9th), plenty of snow and very cold. We have been out of action for about a month, and came back to the firing line three days ago. Fritz is very active where we are at present, and we do a good bit of 'dodging'. We are all looking forward to being home soon, as we think the war is more on the verge of finishing."

Corpl. E T Sims:- "The cigarettes, you may be sure, were very acceptable and will be enjoyed very much indeed. We never say No to a smoke. The weather is bitter cold out here now; at the present time it is snowing (Jan 10th). Shall be glad when the summer comes again, and best of all, when the war ends." *[Killed in action, 28 March 1918, aged 21]*

PTE. Fred W Rye, A.S.C. Motor Transport (at present in England):- "We are rather busy just now; we have about 500 lorries to keep in repair and about 3,300 men in the shops to look after them. I shall be sorry to leave this Company, but of course it has to come sooner or later. All our lorries are used for munitions transports so you see our time is not wasted by being at home." He concludes with thanks "for all the trouble you have taken for us boys at home and abroad."

Driver D Croucher:- "The cigarettes came at a most opportune moment - when we were all with empty cases."

Others who have written are:- W F Dalton, W G Sims, G R Casey C W Probert, A Gates, E Millen, C A Ruck, H Hubble.





**Private, 245352, 2nd (City of London) Battalion, London Regiment (17th Royal Fusiliers),
Formerly Private, 2075, Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles.**

Died of wounds 5 January 1918 Aged 19

Robert's records have been a minefield of false leads and inaccurate reporting. However, we are now confident that Robert was born in May 1898 in Wrens Hill Cottages, Norton. His father, Thomas Simpson Clark, was 1st Whip and Kennel Huntsman for the local hunt, the Tickham Foxhounds. Thomas was a native of Tulney, Berkshire, and Robert's mother, Florence Elizabeth (née Gregory), hailed from Berkeley, Gloucestershire. By the time of the 1911 Census, the family had moved to The Hill, Greenstreet, Lynsted. Robert had an older brother, Thomas Edward, and three younger sisters, Florence Alice, Marion and Violet.

Although registered at birth without a middle name, Robert was christened as Robert "Stewart" on 30 August 1898 in St Mary's Church in his mother's home town of Berkeley. Robert's father predeceased him on 11 October 1911. His mother passed away in June 1941 in Stroud, Gloucestershire, at the age of 81.

We have been unable to find Robert's service records but, via the Register of Personal Effects, where he is incorrectly recorded as Robert "Stuart" Clark, we know he enlisted in Sittingbourne in April 1916. He was just 17 years old. Legally, Robert would not have been eligible for foreign service until his 19th birthday in May 1917.

He eventually embarked for France on 4 October 1917. Just 6 weeks later Robert was wounded during fighting at the Battle of Cambrai (20 November – 6 December).

The regimental war diary during the final month that Robert served in the field reports that there was some relief with the granting of leave and a football competition:

Date	Summary events and Information
1 st Nov 1917 LOUVERVAL	<p>The Battalion is in the same Sector that it has occupied since its arrival in this area.</p> <p>Although bad weather continues, work is being energetically carried on and the good condition of the trenches has called forth the commendation of the G.O.C., who has personally toured the Battalion front.</p> <p>An increased Leave Allotment has been granted to the Division and today the addition of an extra four days to the ordinary period of leave, making a fortnight in all, comes into operation.</p> <p>The Battalion has been allotted an appreciable number of vacancies daily and the total number of 50 men absent on leave at one time, as is the case at present, compares very favourably with the restricted facilities of the past year. The increased allotment coupled with the introduction of the new system which ensures 14 clear days in ENGLAND has met with the hearty approbation of all ranks.</p>
2 nd	In spite of unfavourable weather, our aircraft is fairly active and the enemy artillery continues quiet.



Date	Summary events and Information
3 rd - 6 th Nov	<p>The weather is quite mild, although ground mists in the morning hinder observation. Our patrols are out nightly examining the wire on the Battalion front, but on each occasion this has been found to be uncut.</p> <p>Fighting patrols of 30 O.R.s and over in the charge of an officer are continuing to reconnoitre NO MAN'S LAND. A hostile patrol was encountered on the evening of the 4th and in the engagement that ensued we sustained one casualty, although it is believed that several of the enemy were effectively disposed of.</p>
7 th	<p>The Battalion is to be relieved by the L.R.B. on night of 8th/9th and will move into huts at Divisional Reserve Camp.</p> <p>Although it is intimated that no trains will be available for the relief, permission has been granted for men to board trains used for conveying R.E. material on their return journey.</p>
8/9 th	<p>Battalion relieved by the L.R.B. The relief will always be associated with the death, in peculiarly tragic circumstance, of a popular Warrant Officer. No.230936, C.S.M. DAINTY. E.J. who has been killed in a train collision while returning from the line, and the occurrence has cast a shadow of gloom over the whole Battalion. An enquiry is to be held into the affair.</p> <p>The morning is being devoted to cleaning up, and the usual arrangements have been made for the provision of Baths during the present spell in Divisional Reserve.</p>
9 th	<p>The funeral of C.S.M. DAINTY took place today. The C.O. Second in Command, and a good many officers, warrant officers, N.C.O.s and men were present at the proceedings which were very impressive.</p>
11 th	<p>There is a sudden departure in the style of training from that hitherto carried out. A certain number of men have been earmarked to represent Tanks and artillery flags are being used. New methods of attack are also being practised.</p> <p>The increase in the number of dugouts, the expansion of Dumps and the widening of roads in the forward area, which were noticed during the recent tour of duty appears to foreshadow the early resumption of active operations.</p>
12 th	<p>Brigade Instructions No.2(a) received. "Instructions for carrying out Feint Attacks", which states that arrangements are being made for carrying out a feint attack simultaneously along the whole Divisional Front on a day (Z) and hour to be notified later. Dummy figures, Dummy tanks and smoke screens are to be used for this purpose.</p> <p>169th Infantry Brigade Instructions No.3(a) "Discharge of Smoke on the Divisional Front" in connection with "Feint Attacks" received.</p>
13 th	<p>The Commanding Officer is holding frequent conferences with Company Commanders to discuss the impending operations although the day on which the attack is to take place is still a secret.</p> <p>During the period in Divisional Reserve, a Football Competition has been arranged on the knock-out system. A team comprised of Transport personnel, Drums, etc. have beaten "C" Company team in the Final Round. Medals have been presented to the winning team who</p>

Date	Summary events and Information
13 th Nov Cont.	are also entitled to temporarily retain a silver cup, which has been instituted as a floating trophy. The competition is acting as a good stimulus to the development of recreational training.
14 th	Dull day. Information has been suddenly received that the 36th Division will take over the present Camp tomorrow of which we are to be clear by 11.30 a.m.
15 th	Battalion operation Order No.61 issued (copy attached). Battalion relieved L.R.B. in LOUVERVAL Subsector this evening. Brigade Instructions No.4(a) received.
17 th	169th Brigade Instructions No.9(a) received. The most rigid adherence to secrecy is enjoined.
18 th	Quiet day. Instructions have been received that during the present tour no patrols are to go beyond our own wire. Patrols are out each night examining the wire along the Battalion front. But this was found to be uncut.
19 th	<p>Nucleus Personnel [core reserve on which to draw] who had been detailed whilst in Divisional Reserve proceeded to Transport Lines this evening. The following Officers and O.R.s have been earmarked for this purpose:-</p> <p>Major H.S. BOWEN, Captains K.G. ANDERSON, A.J. WIDDECOMBE, Lieuts W.L. STONE, C.A.L. PASCOE, H.F. JAMES, 2/Lieuts C.G. SCUDAMORE, M.C., W. DYER, A.J. HASSLACHER, 2/Lieut HEWITT, CHIAZZARI, W.J. THOMAS, A.F. WILLIAMSON, W.T. TELFORD, H.D. PRATT, Other Ranks: 68.</p> <p>Information has been received that Zero day has been fixed for tomorrow and Zero hour is to be 6.20 a.m.</p>
20 th	<p>Before dawn, a Dummy Tank was put in position in front of the Left Company by Lt. W.A. FRANCIS, M.C.</p> <p>This was accomplished with great difficulty. Two should have been put up but one unfortunately was completely smashed. At Zero hour smoke bombs were thrown on the whole Battalion front. This was very successful and formed a complete screen. Unfortunately, the Battalion was not included in the initial programme so was only able to assist by making a feint attack. Dummy Figures were also used. Strong patrols were sent out during the night to get in touch with the enemy who were found to be still holding his position in some strength.</p>
21 st	During the morning a report was received from Brigade that the enemy was evacuating MOEUVRES. Three strong patrols were at once sent out but on reaching the enemy wire, were fired on by machine guns and forced to withdraw. Orders were then received to be prepared to form a protective flank along the INCHY ROAD. This, however, was not required.
22 nd	<p>During the day the majority of the Battalion was employed forming dumps of Ammunition, bombs, etc., and as the Q.W.R. bombed along the German trenches, parties were employed repairing the roads across NO MAN'S LAND.</p> <p>A warning order was received to be prepared for an early move in the morning.</p>



Date	Summary events and Information
23 rd	<p>Brigade O.O. No.124 received at 3.30 a.m. The lack of time prevented an issue of a Battalion O.O., so instructions were issued verbally to the O.C. Companies by the C.O. In spite of all endeavours, it was found impossible to reach the assembly positions by Zero hour.</p> <p>The LONDON SCOTTISH who were operating on our left were equally late and in fact both Battalions moved across the open at daybreak to get to their positions. A new Zero hour</p> <p>was mutually arranged by the two C.O.s and the bombing attack launched. For six hours, in spite of frequent attempts, no advance was made by either Battalion owing to the strength of the German bombing blocks. The Battalion managed to get up the three enemy communication trenches to the wire entanglements and were then unable to progress at all.</p> <p>2nd Lieut F.H.C. LUDLOW was killed trying to get across the open and it was realised that the task was beyond achievement without artillery preparation or the aid of Tanks.</p> <p>The C.O. realising this, informed Brigade and put his supporting Company to help the LONDON SCOTTISH who had managed to get on as they were working laterally.</p>
24 th	<p>Orders have been received to consolidate the position and Brigade O.O. 125 being received detailing new boundaries. The work of consolidation was proceeded with energetically. Brigade Operation Order No.126 received. By arrangement with the C.O. of the SCOTTISH it was decided to hold the original position until he was sufficiently reinforced to take over more line. This was done later in the morning on the arrival of two Companies of the 4th LONDONS. At 3 p.m. the enemy counter-attacked but failed to reach the position held by the 2nd LONDONS. The 4th LONDON bombing block, however, formed only 30 yards from the Brigade boundary. The position was now very precarious. The C.O.s of 2nd LONDON and L.R.B. each placed a strong platoon at the disposal of the SCOTTISH. The platoon of the former was intended for a further attack but it was eventually decided that a carefully arranged operation of greater strength would be required.</p>
25 th	<p>The morning was quiet and the usual German artillery and Machine Gun activity had apparently ceased. At 12.30 p.m. however, when the flank Brigade attacked, the hostile artillery opened in full force. Conflicting reports arrived as to the progress of the fight. At about 3 p.m. the "S.O.S." was sent up by the left of the RANGERS. This call was repeated continuously for quite two hours, but beyond a heavy barrage no change took place on the Battalion front.</p> <p>At 5.30 p.m. Brigade O.O. No.127 was received. This order was completed by 10.30 p.m. and the Battalion having been relieved by the Q.V.R. moved back into the old British Front Line in the Right LOUVERVAL Sector.</p>

Date	Summary events and Information
26 th - 28 th	The Battalion rested during the day and at night the whole Battalion worked on a new communication trench across the old NO MAN'S LAND, joining up the old front line to a sunken road running to the HINDENBURG LINE. Brigade O.O. No.128 Received.
29 th	Battalion Operation Order No. 64 issued. Battalion relieved QVR in Left Subsector this evening. "D" and "C" Companies being in the front line, with "A" and "B" Companies in support. Relief was complete by 9 p.m.

The diary for the day of Robert's injury describes the action he was faced with:

Date	Summary events and Information
30 th Nov	<p>After a very quiet night hostile artillery commenced in certain amount of harassing fire on our trenches at about 6 a.m. At 7.30 a.m. it was reported from the line that large parties of the enemy were to be seen North of MOEUVRES and round QUARRY WOOD.</p> <p>Orders were given to "stand to" at 8 a.m. as it appeared evident that the enemy were preparing for an offensive. Large bodies of the enemy were seen attacking to the East. Hostile Batteries and Cavalry were clearly seen.</p> <p>By 8.30 a.m. a very heavy bombardment was put down on our lines, hostile Trench Mortars firing very accurately especially on the Left Company front. As the enemy left their trenches, a very hot fire was opened on them with Rifles and Lewis Guns, and "S.O.S." Rockets were sent up. We appeared to be holding up the enemy on our front, but unfortunately he had managed to get down the old C.T.s on each of our flanks and attacked our two front line Companies on either flank and in rear so that they were forced to withdraw down the C.T.s.</p> <p>The enemy got right through on our left and started bombing the Support Line dugouts. A counter-attack was at once led by Captain BAKER and the enemy driven back to our old front line which we were unable to retake. Blocks were formed in the C.T.s and two Companies of Q.V.R. arrived as reinforcements so that by nightfall our position was fairly secure and the enemy's effort frustrated.</p> <p>At 5.30 p.m. orders were received for relief by the 3rd LONDONS which were carried out. Relief being complete at 4.30 a.m.</p>

Battalion casualties recorded for November totalled:

Officers: 1 killed, 3 wounded, 1 missing. Other ranks: 16 killed, 116 wounded, missing 52.

Robert's records, again inaccurately identifying him as R S Clark "e", somewhat downplay his injuries. He was admitted to a Casualty Clearing Station on 1 December 1917 where his wound was classified



as "Gunshot wound IX, 1 High Explosive". The Army Wound Classification System of Roman numerals explains "IX" = gunshot wound to the lower extremities, and "1" = Simple flesh contusion or wound.

He was transferred to Sick Convoy the next day and transported by the 4th London Field Ambulance to the No 29 Hospital Train to the hospital in Rouen. It is here that the true extent of his injuries are learned. He had in fact suffered a severe injury by shell fire shattering his left foot. The wounds were obviously serious and required the foot to be amputated.

At some time later, Robert was evacuated to the Exeter War Hospital, Devon. It was here he was recommended for a "wound stripe". These had been introduced in 1916, with the approval of King George V. The British Army began awarding a brass stripe to be worn vertically on the left forearm, fastened through the uniform cloth. Additional badges were granted for subsequent wounds.

Army Order 204 of 6 July 1916:

"The following distinctions in dress will be worn on the service dress jacket by all officers and soldiers who have been wounded in any of the campaigns since 4th August, 1914:-

Strips of gold Russia braid, No.1, two inches in length, sewn perpendicularly on the left sleeve of the jacket to mark each occasion on which wounded. In the case of officers, the lower end of the first strip of gold braid will be immediately above the upper point of the flap on cuff.

Warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and men will wear the gold braid on the left sleeve, the lower edge of the braid to be three inches from the bottom of the sleeve. The additional strips of gold braid, marking each subsequent occasion on which wounded, will be placed on either side of the original one at half-inch interval. Gold braid and sewings will be obtained free on indent from the Army Ordnance Department; the sewing on will be carried out regimentally without expense to the public."



Sadly, Robert succumbed to his injuries a month later on 5 January 1918.

A report in the East Kent Gazette on 19 January 1918 explains that Robert's mother and elder brother were able to attend his funeral. Something that so many other families had not been able to do:

**PRIVATE R S CLARK, OF GREENSTREET.
DIED OF WOUNDS.**

We have to record the death of another promising lad of Greenstreet, in the person of Private R. Stuart Clark, of the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles (attached to The Buffs), who died of wounds in Hospital, at Exeter, on the 5th instant. The young man, who was the younger son of the late Mr. Tom Clark, formerly huntsman to the Tickham Foxhounds, and of Mrs F Clark, of the Hill, Greenstreet, was only 19 years of age last May. The young soldier was formerly cashier at the Greenstreet Cooperative Society's shop. He joined up at the outbreak of the war long before he was 18 years of age. Owing to age restrictions, however, he was not sent out to France until October

4th of last year. On November 30th he had his left foot shattered by a shell and it was amputated in Rouen Hospital, France. Eventually he was transferred to the War Hospital at Exeter, Devon, where he passed away as stated. He was laid to rest at Exeter on Wednesday in last week, full military honours being paid him. The funeral was attended by the mother and elder brother, as well as by a party of nurses and wounded soldiers. The floral tributes were very beautiful. Much sympathy is felt in the neighbourhood for the widowed mother, whose elder son is also serving in the Army, being a gunner of the R.G.A. A memorial service was held at Lynsted Parish Church on Sunday last, when the Vicar (the Rev.T.J. Sewell) officiated.

Robert is buried in Exeter Higher Cemetery, Devon. Grave Ref: 142



Robert is commemorated on the Lynsted memorial plaque in his original regiment of the Royal East Kent Yeomanry.

Robert's medal records were found via his service number incorrectly recorded as "Herbert" S Clark. He was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. *[See Appendix 1]*

In May 1918, Robert's family received his money owing. His mother received £6 4s 3d (£6.21p). His brother Thomas and sisters Florence and Marion received £3 2s 1d (£3.10½p) each. In February 1919 his mother received an additional £1 4s 9d (£1.24p). Later, in December 1919, she received his War Gratuity of £8. *[See Appendix 2]* Taken together these amount to roughly £860 in today's money.



The German Spring Offensive



The German Spring Offensive 21 March - 18 July 1918

The German attempt to end the war

“ We must strike at the earliest moment before the Americans can throw strong forces into the scale. We must beat the British.” General Erich Ludendorff.

In the spring of 1918, Germany's fighting strength on the Western Front had increased by 500,000 troops released from fighting on the Russian front. They were confident this was the time to strike.

The Allies knew a major German attack would happen in the spring, but were not sure where. Lines were reinforced, but the British line to the west of Cambrai was weak. The trenches were not complete or had been inadequately prepared .

On 21 March 1918, General Ludendorff launched the offensive. The British were unprepared for the strength of the onslaught. Within 5 hours the enemy fired one million artillery shells - over 3,000 every minute. Then came the elite storm troopers: unburdened by heavy kit that would eventually be their undoing, they travelled fast and cleared their way with flame throwers.

On the first day, 21,000 British soldiers had been taken prisoner. The Somme region, so hard fought for in 1916, was lost to the enemy.

However, the speed of the Germans' advance meant their supply lines could not keep up, leaving the storm troopers short of supplies of both ammunition and food. The use of horses in the supply line was vital, but had been killed for their meat. As the Germans arrived in Albert, they took to looting the food shops and discipline began to deteriorate.

The Germans sustained almost a quarter of a million casualties in March and April. They were simply running out of men. The Allies, on the other hand, were bolstered and refreshed by the arrival of 250,000 American troops.

On 15 July 1918, Ludendorff ordered what would be the last German led offensive of World War One. Although they advanced 2 miles into Allied held land, they suffered enormous losses. Cleverly, the French Army allowed the Germans through, knowing their supply lines could not keep up. The French then hit back on the Marne and a massive French counter-attack took place.

Between March and July 1918, the Germans lost one million men. They had no hope of receiving reinforcements.



Herbert David Gambell (see opposite)

Herbert David GAMBELL M.M.



Lance Corporal 70855, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) A Company, 6th Battalion

Formerly Private G/6063, 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

Killed in action 21 March 1918 Aged 20

Herbert was born in Wychling in May 1897, son of David, a wagoner, and Mary Ann (née Burgess) and christened in Lynsted Church on 13 June the same year. He would later sing in Lynsted Church choir. There is some confusion in early records between Herbert's christening and the 1901 Census, in which he is registered as "Gambrell".

By the time of the 1901 Census, David and Mary were living at Ludgate Farm together with Herbert and his younger brother, Sydney Clarence William, and his Aunt Alice, the 12 year old sister of Mary. The 1911 Census places the family at Radfield Cottages, Bapchild, with the addition of another son, Wilfred John. On leaving school, Herbert took up employment as a farm labourer.

On 8 April 1915, Herbert attended his medical. On Monday 12 April, he was enlisted in The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) for the duration of the war. His attestation was witnessed by Frank Boucher, and the Magistrate, Colonel Honeyball. Herbert's recruitment papers show an annotation saying "this man is used to horses". This would prove useful for his work as a machine gunner.

At the time of his recruitment, Herbert claimed he was 19 years 11 months old. All records point to him being only 17 years 11 months old. This was not an unfamiliar occurrence. Although Herbert was only one month short of being eligible to enlist, the minimum age for service abroad was 19 years. With the benefit of hindsight we know what a young Herbert would have to face. However, in 1915 people did not have the dubious benefit of knowing the conditions they would face. The likelihood was that Herbert would have seen it as a chance to serve his country and something of an adventure.

After training in the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), Herbert was transferred to the 1st Battalion of the regiment, and posted to France on Tuesday 17 August 1915 as part of the British Expeditionary Force. He was underage by nine months.

At the beginning of the war, all infantry battalions had their own machine-gun section and the British Expeditionary Force established a Machine Gun School at Wisques in France. Herbert would serve in the 1st Battalion as part of their machine-gun crew.

Herbert joined his battalion at Poperinghe and within 2 days went into the trenches for the first time at La Brique. The remainder of 1915 and beginning of 1916 saw Herbert alternating between billets and long spells in the trenches.

On 16 March 1916, the 1st Battalion departed Flanders for Calais. Here they were given a much deserved 10 day "rest period". "Rest periods" were taken up with bringing the men up to speed on new methods of warfare and new inventions. It was also the only time for new drafts to train in mock trenches. So, at the end of this rest period, the men marched for 3 days to the Ypres area and back into the trenches at La Brique.

At the beginning of August, a month into the beginning of the Battle of the Somme, Herbert and the 1st Battalion, along with the rest of the 71st Brigade, moved to the trenches south of Beaumont Hamel. Then followed a period of intensive training during which they gradually approached the frontline.



Turning to Moody's "The Historical Record of The Buffs", he describes the action of the 1st Battalion on 15 September 1916. This was the first day of the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, when tanks were first used in action, sadly not successfully. During this action, Herbert distinguished himself and was awarded the Military Medal:

"One line of elaborate defence after another was falling into our hands, and Sir Douglas Haig determined to keep up the pressure as long as the weather and consequent state of the country permitted it. A general attack then was opened on the 15th September, the objective being the rearmost of the enemy's original lines of defence, between Morval and Le Sars; and when the advance on this front had gained the Morval line the Commander-in-Chief arranged to bring forward the left of the British troops across the Thiepval ridge.

There is a road running from Ginchy to Morval, and as it approaches the ridge, on which the latter village stands, it is sunken and of course conceals anything in it, and just half-way between the two villages a railway to the south of the sunken road almost touches it. Where the road and the railway most closely approach, the Germans had constructed a very strong work which was known as the Quadrilateral and which was but a little way from the edge of Bouteaux Wood. On the 13th of the month the 71st Brigade had attacked this Quadrilateral, but the attack had failed. The 15th was the first occasion on which tanks were used. Three of these new weapons were told off to assist at the attack of the Quadrilateral, and consequently a gap in our barrage had been arranged so that these could advance before the infantry started. However successful the tanks were afterwards, these three proved worse than useless, because two of them broke down, and the third was so knocked about that it could do nothing, having amongst other injuries lost its periscope, so that it could not see. The unfortunate thing was,



Troops pose with one of the broken down tanks on 15 September 1916

that there remained a gap in the barrage, exactly opposite the main face of the work to be assaulted. At 6.20am the 8th Bedfordshires advanced gallantly over the open, a bombing party attacking up a trench from the south-east. The enemy's machine guns caught the Bedfordshire men on the top of the ridge and, though they tried in the most manly way, they could make no progress.

The Buffs supported the Bedfords with the finest courage, but could not stand against the very heavy machine gun fire opposed to them. They suffered more casualties than any other unit in



the brigade. A great number of men found cover in shell holes and managed later to get back into the lines. Captain Causton assembled as many of the battalion as he could in the trench originally occupied by the 8th Bedfords. The 2nd York and Lancaster Regiment had advanced behind the Buffs and had also assembled in the Bedfords' trench. On reorganising there were found in this trench about forty Buffs, two to three hundred York and Lancaster and forty Bedfords."

At this point, Herbert was one of the Buffs taking cover in a shell hole when 2nd Lieutenant Hills called for a volunteer to take a message back to the line. This would have to be done over open ground and under fire from the enemy machine guns and at risk from allied shells falling short. Herbert volunteered. This message was instrumental in alerting the Command that their Artillery was shelling British positions.

The History of the Buffs continues:

"About 12.30pm a number of the Battalion was still lying in shell holes in the open, and at that hour a message was received from 2nd Lieut Hills:

"Am in a series of shell holes about two hundred yards from the German line. German line was apparently untouched till midday bombardment. We got to the present position and were unable to proceed owing to machine guns. No signs of Bedfords ahead. Baly killed, Kesby and Miller wounded. Have about twelve men with me and can't get in touch with anybody. Our shells fell first right beyond German line, second just short, third very short. People in valley on left have just retired on account of shell fire. Machine guns are not touched, as all opened on retiring line. We have fire from the left and right and just off central sweeping us occasionally."

During the night of 15th/16th the Buffs were withdrawn to a trench running south-east of Guillemont after losing the following in casualties: Lieut. C J P Baly, 2nd Lieuts G W P Wyatt and G R Reid, and fifty-three men killed; 2nd Lieut Hill wounded; Captain T H Kesby and 2nd Lieut Miller and seven others wounded and missing; 2nd Lieut Smith, Captain Jones, RAMC, Lieut Tuke and 2nd Lieut Goodheart wounded. It was later ascertained that Kesby was amongst the slain. One hundred and eighty three other ranks wounded.

During the night the mass of wounded was cleared with the greatest energy. At 7 am on the 16th, strong German reinforcements were seen to enter the Quadrilateral."

The Buffs took no further part in the battle and were relieved on 19 September and marched 16 miles back to billets at Morlancourt. Here they expected a long rest, as the battalion was very tired and severely depleted. However, 24 hours later, they were marched back to the front to relieve a Guards brigade. Fighting continued until 25 September, with the Buffs being heavily involved in the fighting and wire-cutting. On 26 September, the battalion was again relieved by which time 174 of their comrades had been killed.

The battalion war diary entry for 13th October notes:

The following awards appeared in Divisional Orders:-

Capt. W.R. CORRALL – Military Cross

Lt. JACOBS – Military Cross

No. 6063 – Private Gamble [sic] H.D. – Military Medal.



Back home, the news was announced in the East Kent Gazette on 24 October 1916:

**WAR HONOUR
FOR A BAPCHILD BUFF**

The parishioners of Bapchild will be pleased to learn that Private H. D. Gambell, of The Buffs, who belongs to Bapchild, has been recommended for the Military Medal for bravery in the field. Private Gambell, who is 19 years of age, is the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. D Gambell, of Radfield Cottages, Bapchild. He went to school in Bapchild, and afterwards worked on the farm at Radfield, and his employer, Mr. W. S. Wood, and the bailiff, Mr. G Philpott, speak in high terms of the lad. Before he was 18 he took charge of a team of four horses.

Young Gambell joined The Buffs in April 1915, and went to France in August the same year. He came home on leave last January. The young soldier is now attached to a machine gun company, and his winning of the Military Medal at 19 is a feat to be proud of. The wish is general that young Gambell will be spared to return home after the War to enjoy his honours.

The awarding of the Military Medal [See Appendix 1] was confirmed in the London Gazette on 8 December 1916:

His Majesty the KING has been graciously pleased to award the Military Medal for bravery in the Field to the undermentioned Non-Commissioned Officers and Men: —

6063 Pte. H. D. Gambell, E. Kent R.



Herbert Gambell's Military Medal

On 21 October, after a brief spell in the trenches near Givenchy, Herbert's battalion moved back to Daours and then to Bethune.

In October of 1915, a specialist "Machine Gun Corps" had been created. The machine gun teams that had been formed in each brigade were gradually transferred into the new Corps. Officers in the new Machine Gun Corps were required to be skilled in arms, mathematics, trigonometry and calculus. The fittest and best of the "other ranks" were chosen by the new Corps. This was not popular with some of the most senior officers, who would lose some of their most able men to this Corps. On Saturday 2 December 1916, Herbert was transferred to the 16th Company, Machine Gun Corps, remaining attached to 1st Buffs.

Four days later, on 6 December, Herbert was promoted to Lance Corporal (unpaid). He was now responsible for a crew of six men, and in charge of firing the gun and carrying and erecting the tripod.

There was no relief for Herbert until Christmas. The Company war diary tells us how Christmas day was celebrated:

Date (1916)	Diary
22nd Dec	All guns were relieved by 6p.m. The two PICCADILLY guns could not be retrieved until after dark. The whole of the Company went into billets at Beuvry.
23rd	Sections cleaned up in the morning. The transport carried from LE QUESNOY to BETHUNE.
24th	<u>Sunday</u> . The Company rested and had passes to BETHUNE.
25th	The men were given an Xmas dinner by the Officers, waited on by the NCOs. Nothing was sent to the Company from England except 6 tins of Christmas pudding. (8th Tin).
26th	Gun kit etc prepared for the trenches. Gas helmets inspected.
27th	The Company relieved the 64th Machine Gun Company in the line HOHENZOLLEN SECTOR

The beginning of 1917 opened with 6 weeks in the line at Vermelles. Eventually relieved on 15 February, when they marched to Bethune and then on to Robecq. On arrival at their billets, the officer in charge reported that no food was ready for the men and there was no cover for the horses. After 2 weeks of daily training, the Company marched back to Bethune then back into the line at Loos. The Company remained in the line for several weeks.

The war diary notes that, during April, work was being undertaken to repair damaged wire. It is therefore of no surprise that on 9 April 1917 Herbert injured his hand - "caused by galvanised wire". His injuries were initially treated by the 18 Field Ambulance, who then transferred him to the 1st Convalescent Hospital in Boulogne on 11 April.

The Medical Officer considered the injury to be "trivial", for which Herbert was deemed "not to blame". The Services were obviously on the lookout for self-inflicted wounds. Section 18 (2a) 33 of the Field Service Pocket Book (1914) states that "Wilfully maiming himself with intent to render himself unfit for service" has a maximum punishment of imprisonment.

On 29 April, Herbert returned to his base at Camiers and re-joined his Company in the field at Vermelles the following day.

The Company would soon move on to Philosophe and then to Mazingarbe, where they saw heavy fighting and little rest. As the Company moved to Hulloch on 1 July, Herbert left for a brief "home leave", no doubt buoyed up by hearing he had been awarded Proficiency Pay Class 1. He returned to his Company on 12 July.

On 25 July the Company was relieved and bussed to Bailleul Aux Cornailles, where they were no



Herbert David GAMBELL M.M.

doubt relieved to have access to baths and new clothes. The next few days were used for a general clean-up in time for an inspection by the Brigadier General. Most of August was spent in training, with a brief break on 10 August for Brigade sports day; here they gained two firsts and a second.

By 29 August, they were back in the thick of it in trenches at Mazingarbe. For the next few months, the Company spent the majority of their time in trenches in the Cambrai area during which several men of the Company were awarded gallantry medals.

On Tuesday 4 December 1917, Herbert was made an Acting Second Corporal for a period of a week, and then, on 9 December, he was appointed "paid" Lance Corporal. The following day the Company was relieved and headed to billets in Courcellette Le Comte. Days in the approach to Christmas were taken up with training and gun drill. The Corp had a slightly delayed Christmas celebration, as the war diary details:

Date (1917)	Diary
24th Dec	Training
25th Dec	Unable to give the men their Xmas dinner on this day owing to great difficulty of obtaining supplies.
26th Dec	Training
27thDec	The Company treated this day as Xmas Day and the men had their Xmas dinners of Pork etc. Orders received from 16th Infantry Battalion that the Company must be ready to move to BOULON WOOD area at 3 hours notice. Guns and material were packed immediately.

Herbert's Company continued with training until 26 January 1918, when they returned to the trenches.

On 23 February 1918, Herbert returned home for the last time. In his absence, on 1 March, the four Machine Gun Companies in the 6th Division, namely 16th, 18th, 71st and 192nd Companies, were amalgamated to form No.6 Battalion Machine Gun Corps.

On 9 March, Herbert returned to France and the following day joined his unit in the field. Here they were in position awaiting the expected attack at the start of the German Spring Offensive. The next 10 days were spent waiting for that battle to start.

At 2am on 21 March, a message was received from the Division that the enemy were expected to attack at dawn.

The following extract from the Battalion war diary details the actions of A Company, Herbert's Company on that day:

Action of "A" Company No.6 Battalion

Machine Gun Corps in the QUEANT SECTOR, March 21st and 22nd 1918

4.10 a.m.: Information received that the Enemy would probably attack during the morning and necessary preparations accordingly made.

5.0 a.m.: Intense hostile bombardment commenced by guns of all calibres, a large number of gas shells being used. The bombardment was particularly severe on front line and area behind the reserve line. All ranks wore box respirators during the bombardment. Telephone wires were cut and no communication was possible until the barrage lifted.

10.0 a.m.: Enemy reported over the top. From this time onwards, news was obtained from wounded men returning from LEEDS RESERVE where the enemy was held up by Strong Points for a considerable time.

Headquarters manned SUNKEN ROAD and later moved to DUNELM AVENUE joining infantry in manning the trench.

The enemy pressed on from both flanks and made good use of his light Machine Guns. Being unable to get into touch with any guns, the remaining party from Company H.Q. moved to the VAULX LINE, reaching same at 1.15 p.m.

Instructions were issued for all stragglers to be collected and the teams under 2/Lt ROBERTSON reinforced.

Headquarters then moved to Brigade at VAULX and scattered teams re-organised.

No.1 SECTION

The guns of this Section fixed 8 belts on enemy advancing up the L'HIRONDELLE VALLEY, securing some good targets. Three guns were knocked out by hostile artillery, and the Officer in Charge wounded.

Owing to low visibility and enemy working around on left flank, the N.C.O. in charge withdrew his gun to a position in rear and later moved back to the VAULX-MORCHIES LINE.

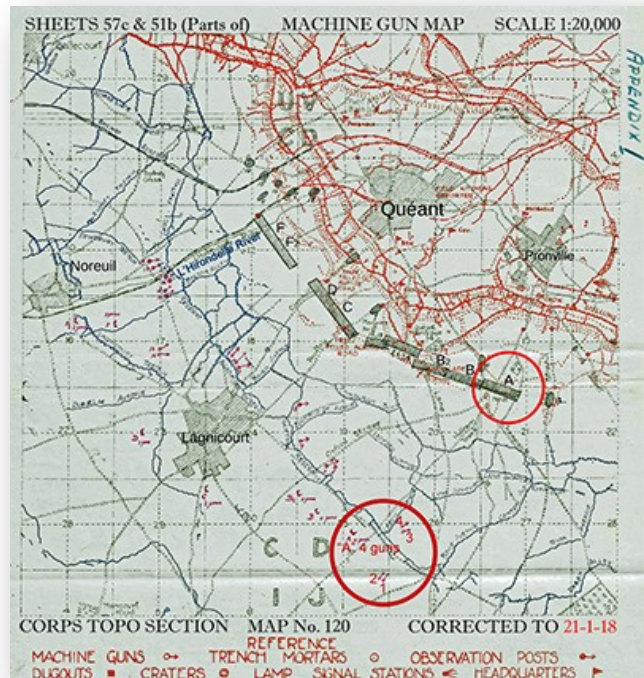
No.2 SECTION

The enemy was first observed about 2.0 p.m. on ridge between guns and NOREUIL VILLAGE. Fire was brought to bear on them by the two left guns and good results obtained.

The enemy was next observed coming up valley from LAGNICOURT and offered a splendid target. His advance was checked and heavy losses caused.

During the day, the enemy succeeded in gaining a footing in the trench to the left. The situation remained normal during the night and until about 8.0 a.m. on the morning of the 22nd, when the line was heavily bombarded.

At 10.0 a.m. the enemy obtained a footing in the trench to the right and the guns were



Herbert's position on 21 March 1918



mounted on parados and assisted our infantry in repeatedly expelling the enemy. Another gun was sent up, and did good work against enemy trying to enter VAULX WOOD.

At about 2.30 p.m. the infantry decided to evacuate the trench and their retirement was helped by the two remaining guns. After the infantry had retired the two guns moved back to SUNKEN ROAD at VAULX. One being hit by enemy shell on the way back and put out of action. Further orders were received to retire back to Army Line, and with two more guns collected from stragglers, positions were taken up, and held until relieved by the 41st M.G. Battalion at 2.30 a.m. on the 23rd inst.

No.3 SECTION

No news is obtainable regarding three guns of this Section and it is assumed that the teams are casualties or prisoners. The Officer and Section Sergeant are also missing. The N.C.O. in charge of gun at C.11.c.83.57 reports that fire was opened on S.O.S¹. Lines. When the mist lifted the enemy were observed advancing along road in C.11.b, in parties of thirty to fifty.

Fire was brought to bear on the road, heavy casualties inflicted and enemy stopped.

Owing to enemy working around to the back of gun position, the gun was withdrawn and later reinforced guns in rear. The two guns at C.17.d.00.70 were heavily shelled during the bombardment and it is thought that one gun and team was destroyed. The other gun fired 8 belts on S.O.S. line and 16 belts at enemy advancing across the open, causing heavy casualties. This gun was later put out of action and the two surviving men on team joined the guns in reserve.

No.4 SECTION.

During the bombardment one gun was destroyed by shell fire, but no men were hit, although teams were standing by in readiness for action for six hours. When the barrage lifted, guns were ordered to fire on their S.O.S. lines and continued to do so until the mist lifted, when the enemy were observed on ridge.

The battery being badly situated for direct fire, LIEUT EVES moved forward into LAGINOURT TRENCH and got into touch with the 2/Y&L who informed him that the 1/K.S.L.I. were holding the Sunken Road in front and that they were going to make a stand in their present position. The guns were mounted and, shortly afterwards, the enemy came on in force, great execution being done by the guns which continued firing until the enemy was within 40 yards.

Hostile parties however, gained a footing in the trench higher up and started working down, firing into the back of gun teams and putting one gun out of action with bombs.

The 2nd in Command, 1/K.S.L.I. now ordered all ranks in the vicinity to vacate trench as no bombs were available.

A dash across the open was made to DUNELM AVENUE, in doing so, the two men carrying guns were hit, and a number of spare men also became casualties.

Rifles were picked up and a stand made in DUNELM AVENUE, but the enemy bombed down the trench and drove the survivors into the open LIEUT EVES then made for the VAULX-

¹An "S.O.S." barrage was fired in response to a German counterattack. An S.O.S. barrage could be requested via a flare signal of a pre arranged colour if the telephone lines had been cut. A pre-arranged barrage would then be aimed at No Man's Land.



MORCHIES line and attached his few remaining men to No.2 SECTION.

OBSERVATIONS

The scheme of M.G. defence was entirely upset by enemy working around flanks. Most guns were sited for frontal fire and in order to traverse to the left and right, it was necessary to move positions, and in doing so many gun teams suffered casualties.

Low visibility hampered gunners from obtaining good observation and, communication being impossible, many isolated teams were unaware of the situation until the enemy was at close quarters.

The system of shell hole emplacements without shell proof dug-outs and communication, does not improve the confidence of the teams, and their morale is shaken after a terrific bombardment of the nature experienced. Several guns were knocked out, which would have done good work had they been kept under shell proof cover and mounted directly the barrage lifted.

It is suggested that direct fire should in future be the first principle in M.G. defence schemes, and guns sited in pairs to form a series of strong points in echelon, the enemy will thus continually be held up.

The enemy employed large numbers of light machine guns, and appears to have made remarkable progress in the development of these arms.

(Signed) W.W. Hammond, Capt.

Commanding "A" Company. No.6 Battalion MGC. Dated 31st March 1918.

The casualty figures for the No 6 Battalion Machine Gun Corps for 21/22 March 1918 numbered:

	Officers	Other Ranks
Killed	3	11
Wounded	6	76
Missing	5	194
TOTAL	14	281

Of the 64 machine guns in the Corps, 60 were lost or destroyed.

Winston Churchill, then British Minister of Munitions, was at the front on that day. He wrote:

"there was a rumble of artillery fire, mostly distant, and the thudding explosions of aeroplane raids. And then, exactly as a pianist runs his hands across a keyboard from treble to bass, there rose in less than one minute the most tremendous cannonade I shall ever hear. It swept around us in a wide curve of red flame".



Herbert David GAMBELL M.M.

In all, casualties on 21/22 March 1918, totalled:

	Killed	Wounded	Prisoners	Total
German	10,851	28,778	300	39,929
British	7,512	10,000	31,000	38,512

Herbert had survived 2½ years of intense fighting as a machine-gunner at a time when their average life expectancy was 3 weeks.

The East Kent Gazette announced Herbert's death in an article in their 27 April 1918 issue:

ROLL OF HONOUR
A YOUNG RADFIELD SOLDIER
KILLED
LANCE-CORPL

H. D. GAMBELL, M.M.

Mr. and Mrs. David Gambell, of Radfield, Bapchild, Sittingbourne, have received the sad news of the death of their elder son, Herbert David Gambell, who was a lance-corporal in the Buffs, and who was killed in action on 21st March, the first day of the German offensive. The young man who was in his 21st year, and whose portrait is given, was employed on the farm at Radfield, when he joined the Army in April 1915. He went to France the following August, and in September 1916 won the Military Medal for taking an urgent message, in action, near Guillemont, under fire. A notice of the young soldier's gallant feat appeared in the "Gazette" at the time. He had been in France for two and a half years, and only returned home on leave on March 10th.

An officer, in writing to Mrs. Gambell, informing her of her son's death, says:- "He was one of the best men we had. He was killed during an action on 21st March. I regret that I was not his own officer, but I have heard of him from his officer, who was badly wounded on the same day. I may say that everyone who knew him spoke very highly of him, and every one in the Company regrets his loss. I ask you to accept my deepest sympathy, and indeed the sympathy of

the other officers and men of the Company."

Writing on April 18th, Sec-Lieut. N. E. Dalby, officer in charge of No 1 Section, said:- "Dear Madam, It grieves me very much to reply to your letter with reference to your boy. There are only a few words that can explain the circumstances leading up to the end.

He had charge of one of my guns when the Boche attacked us on the 21st. The only possible thing which any of the gunners could do was to stick to duty. This he did bravely, but very shortly afterwards was hit by a bullet from a rifle or machine gun, of the Boche, through the chest. The result was instantaneous death so he did not suffer and (as is usually the case when hit) probably did not feel it at all. He was, indeed, a splendid fellow; one of the best of my boys, and liked by all (officers and men), a most agreeable fellow. The place where he was hit was beside a ruined village called Noreuil, which is near a more important place called Lagnicourt. The nearest large town would be Bullecourt. Of course you know that the Boche has all that ground now, so we cannot say exactly where he is buried. But the Boche is not quite so bad as he is painted; so I am sure he will have a soldier's grave."

Mr. and Mrs. Gambell have a younger son fighting in France, and it is hoped that he will come through safely. Much sympathy is felt for the bereaved family.



In the East Kent Gazette on 27 April, Herbert's family placed the following notice:

GAMBELL – In loving Memory of our beloved son, who gave his life for his country on March 21st 1918, in his 21st year.

Could we have clasped his dying hand,
And heard his last farewell,
It would not have been so hard to part
With our boy we loved so well.

For he died for his king and country,
With the bravest of the brave,
Now all we have is his dear photo,
Since he found a hero's Grave.

From Mum, Dad, and Brothers.

On 11 May 1918, his death was also announced in the Faversham and North East Kent News:

ROLL OF HONOUR

**Corpl. H. D. GAMBELL, M.M. MACHINE
Gun Corps**

The death is reported of another former member of the Lynsted Church Choir namely Corpl. Herbert David Gambell, M.M., of the Machine Gun Corps, who was killed in action on the opening day of the present German offensive. His parents formerly lived at Ludgate Farm, Lynsted, but some years ago moved into the adjoining parish of Bapchild.

Herbert did not live to be officially presented with his Military Medal. Neither were his parents, who were by now living in Wanstalls Cottage, Greenstreet, able to accept the invitation to attend a presentation in London. Herbert was posthumously awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War and Victory medals. *[See Appendix 1]*

In November 1918, Herbert's father received his money owing, in the amount of £13 7s 6d (£13.37½p). In May 1920, he also received the War Gratuity of £14. *[See Appendix 2]* Taken together these amount to roughly £1,500 in today's money.



Herbert David GAMBELL M.M.

Herbert has no known grave but is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France, Bay 10.

FOINQUINOS H. W.
FOSTER J.
GAMBELL H. D. M. M.
GOAD F. B.
GRINSELL E. J.

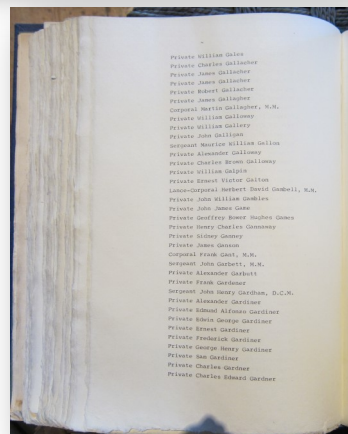


He is also remembered on the Bapchild Memorial, in the Church of St Laurence.

On the formation of the Machine Gun Corps, Belton House near Grantham in Lincolnshire was handed over to the forces and a machine gun school set up in the grounds. The nearby parish church of St Wulfram became the regimental church of the Corps. A plaque has been erected on the north wall, commemorating the 160,500 men of the Machine Gun Corps. Below the plaque lies the Roll of Honour for the 62,000 men of the Corps who gave their lives in World War One. The high number of casualties gave rise to the Corp's nickname of "The Suicide Club".



Private Ernest Victor Galton
Lance-Corporal Herbert David Gambell, M.M.
Private John William Gambles



The Parish Church of St Wulfram, Grantham

Herbert's younger brother, Sydney, also enlisted in the forces underage. However, he was found out and returned home twice. He eventually did join the Royal West Kent Regiment when of age and also served in the Machine Gun Corps. Sydney survived the conflict. Herbert's youngest brother, Wilfred, died in 1919 while serving in the forces. He is also commemorated in this book.

Herbert was remembered by his family on the first anniversary of his death in the 22 March issue of the East Kent Gazette:

IN MEMORIAM:

GAMBELL. In ever-loving memory of our dearest son and brother, Lance-Corporal Herbert David Gambell, M.M., eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. D. Gambell, Radfield, Bapchild, who fell in action, March 21st, 1918.

A loving son and brother kind,
A beautiful memory left behind;
Friends may think that we forget
you,
When at times they see us smile;
But they little know the sorrow
Which that smile hides all the
while.
From his ever-loving Mum, Dad,



Herbert's death plaque

The Society is indebted to James Gambell, Herbert's nephew and Sydney's son, for his invaluable help in recording his story.





**Private, G/9035, 10th (Service) Battalion,
Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) (Kent Division)**

Killed in action 23 March 1918 Aged 19

Herbert was born at 7 Cellar Hill Cottages, Lynsted, on 22 May 1898, to Hernhill-born Joseph, a brickfield labourer, and Caroline Elizabeth (née Smith) a native of Faversham. The youngest of their six children, Herbert's older siblings were Florence Emma, Alice Ruth, Joseph Harry, Elizabeth Annie and George William. He was christened at St Mary of Charity Church, Faversham, on 28 April 1898.

On leaving school, Herbert started an apprenticeship at the Conyer shipbuilding yard. He did not complete his apprenticeship as he left on his enlistment in Chatham in July 1915. On enlistment Herbert was just 17 and would not be eligible for posting overseas until May 1917. However, it is clear that, as with so many others, his eagerness to play his part meant he lied about his age and was sent to the front in mid 1916 at the age of 18.

On 4 May 1916, the 10th (Service) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) (Kent Division), was mobilised for war and landed in France. During 1916, they saw action on the Somme at the Battles of Flers-Courcelette and Transloy Ridges. However, at some time during this period Herbert's true age was discovered and he was removed from the front to guard German prisoners-of-war until he reached the age of 19 in May 1917.

During 1917, his regiment saw action at the Battle of Messines (7 - 14 June), the Battle of Pilkem Ridge (31 July – 2 August), the Battle of the Menin Road (20 – 26 September) and operations on the Flanders coast.

We know that Herbert came home on his first leave in November, at which time his battalion moved to Italy to strengthen the Italian resistance. It is not clear whether, on return from leave, he joined his battalion, or whether he re-joined them on their return to France in March 1918. The battalion's movements from the beginning of March up to Herbert's death on 23 March are detailed in the war diary:

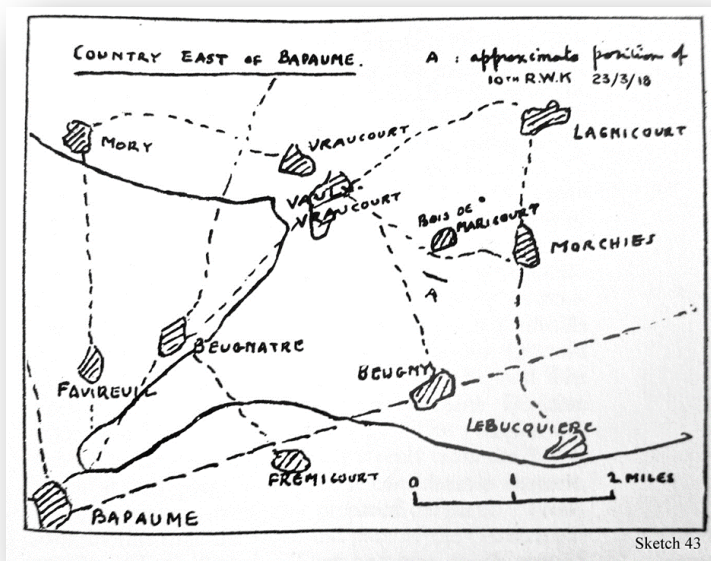
Date	Diary
1st March 1917	S. GEORGIO della PERTICHE (Italy): Situation Normal. Battalion Strength: 46 Officer; 846 Other Ranks.
2nd	S. GEORGIO della PERTICHE: Situation Normal. "A" and "B" Companies and one half Battalion Transport proceeded by bus to PADOVA and entrained for FRANCE. Time of Entrainment 8.30 a.m. The remainder of Battalion embussed at 8.30 a.m. and entrained at PADOVA at 1.30 p.m.
3rd	Situation Normal. Strength: 46 Officers; 842 Other Ranks.
4th - 6th	Situation Normal.
7th	2 a.m.: First half of Battalion arrived at DOULENS (Map Ref: LENS II FRANCE) detrained, and proceeded by march route to BEAUDRICOURT. 12 Noon: Second half Battalion detrained at MONDICOURT and proceeded by



Date	Diary
7th March Cont.	march route to BEAUDRICOURT. Captain G.W. HINDLE awarded M.C. for Gallantry whilst in charge of a Patrol across the R. PIAVA on 19th February 1918. 21222 Private H. WAITE and 19795 Private W. STONE awarded M.M. for gallantry whilst on Patrol with Captain HINDLE across the R. PIAVA.
8th - 15th	Situation normal. Strength: 46 Officers; 840 Other Ranks. [BEAUDRICOURT. Map Ref: LENS SHEET II]
16th	BEAUDRICOURT: Re-organisation of 123rd Infantry Brigade carried out under new Army Order. This necessitated 11th Battalion Royal West Kent Regiment being disbanded, and the following Officers and 250 Other Ranks of that Battalion were taken on strength as from today. LIEUT COL. A.C. CORFE, D.S.O.; MAJOR A.J. JIMENEZ M.C.; CAPT. R. KERR, M.C.; CAPT. C.F. HALL, LIEUT. L.E. HALE. LIEUT.COL. A.C. CORFE took over command of the Battalion from today. The 20th Durham Light Infantry is transferred from 123rd to 124th Brigade.
17th - 20th	Situation Normal. Strength: 51 Officers; 1070 Other Ranks.

The story of Herbert's last days, and the dreadful position in which he and the rest of the 10th Battalion found themselves, is best explained in the words of Captain C.T. Atkinson in his book, "The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, 1914-1919":

"While the bulk of the 11th went off to Reinforcement or Entrenching battalions the draft which joined the 10th included Colonel Corfe himself, whose splendid example and leadership had been so important a factor in the great successes of the 11th. With him came Major Jimenez, Captains R. Kerr and C.F. Hall and Lieut. Hale, Colonel Corfe taking over command of the battalion from Major Wallis, who had been commanding since March 1st when Colonel Beattie had left on a month's special leave.



When the bombardment which crashed down on the British lines on the morning of March 21st proclaimed in unmistakable fashion the beginning of the German attack, there was little delay about getting the Forty-First Division to the front. It was actually on its way to Albert when the battle opened, but its destination was altered and the trains diverted, and before midnight the 10th R.W.K. had detrained at Achiet le Grand. Next afternoon [March 22nd] it pushed forward to Fremincourt on the Bapaume road [See left] and at 5 o'clock orders were received to prepare a position South of Beugnatre



which was to join up with the 122nd Brigade on the Beugnatre-Bapaume road. The work had barely been started before the order was cancelled, and the 10th was ordered forward to Beugny to relieve the troops who were holding a line N. and N.E. of that village. These troops belonged for the most part to the Sixth Division, which had been in the front line near Lagnicourt when the attack started and had been forced back after two days of heavy fighting and stubborn resistance to a line four miles in rear.

By 3 a.m. on March 23rd the 10th was in position, and before daybreak new trenches had been dug, and all four companies were in line, A B C and D from right to left, facing about North just West of Morchies. On its left, though not actually in touch with it, for there proved to be a gap on this flank of nearly 1,000 yards, was the 124th Brigade opposite Vaulx-Vraucourt, on its right the 11th Queen's with the Nineteenth Division beyond them and nearer Beugny. The position was not a good one, the line ran through a valley and observation of what was happening on the flanks was difficult. During the early morning, however, the enemy made little serious attempt to press, though he started shelling about 8 a.m. and machine-guns caused some casualties. One of these was successfully rushed by a patrol ably led by Sergt. White, the crew being killed or taken, but at first the battalion had had few good targets. About 10 a.m. the enemy began to show in strength, delivering an attack in mass which was beaten back, while a whole battalion advanced over the ridge on the 10th's left flank, giving its Lewis-gunners a chance of which they took full advantage. From this time the shelling got heavier, and the enemy attacked repeatedly.

Against the 10th they made no progress, but between 10 and 11 the enemy pushed forward through the gap on the left of the 10th, and about the same time the troops on the right of the 11th Queen's retired. Soon after midday the Germans reached Lebuquière, South of the Bapaume road. On this the Forty-First Division issued orders for its advanced line to retire in conformity with the Nineteenth Division, who were falling back on Beugny. These orders apparently reached The Queen's, some of whom, though not their battalion headquarters, withdrew about 2.30 p.m. as ordered, but they never got to the 10th R.W.K., who continued to maintain their position long after their flanks had been uncovered by the retirement and though the enemy were some distance in rear. Indeed it was 6 p.m. before the Germans finally managed to overcome their resistance. About 1 p.m. [March 23rd] a runner who had been sent with a message to Brigade Headquarters had returned reporting that the enemy were between the battalion and its brigade and that it was impossible to get through, and shortly afterwards the enemy had begun to threaten from the flanks the trench and sunken road in which the headquarters of the two battalions [The 11th Queen's had the headquarters in touch with the 10th.] were defending themselves. For some time these were kept at bay, but converging attacks in increasing strength at last compelled the survivors to surrender to save the numerous wounded who had been brought in to this post. Colonel Corfe himself was among the wounded and the position was perfectly hopeless. The front line companies held out as long, they beat off all attacks and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, until all ammunition was expended. Casualties had been heavy and the position had long been hopeless. But their long stand had been of great value in keeping the Germans back and enabling the main position of the Division to be maintained intact. To this line but few of the 10th got back. Captain Holden displayed great resource in extricating a substantial part of A Company, fighting his way back to the new defensive line in front of Beugnatre through the enemy who threatened to envelope him; here he collected his men with a few survivors of the



other companies, but they were a scanty remnant, well under 100 in all. In this work he received great assistance from 2nd Lieut. Cheel and C.S.M. Cooper, both of whom distinguished themselves greatly. Colonel Corfe himself, Major Jiminez, Captains Waydeline and Hall, ten subalterns and over 400 men were returned as "missing." Two officers, 2nd Lieuts. Percy and Cooper, were wounded and the men known to be either killed or wounded came to nearly 50. Those who had reached Beugnatre were promptly reinforced with all the details, some 70 or so, whom Major Wallis could collect from the transport lines, but they saw no more fighting in this battle, being placed in reserve positions near Bihucourt, when next evening they fell back to Gommecourt.....

..... The 10th's share in the great battle had been briefer than that of either the 7th or 8th, and it had not been fortunate. The miscarriage of the orders which should have reached it turned its own tenacity into a misfortune. It was hard in particular on Colonel Corfe, whose fine record as the commander of a hard-fighting battalion was likely to have brought him before long to the command of a brigade, that his first action at the head of the 10th should have ended in his falling into the enemy's hands. But the fight which the 10th had put up did not go unrecognized; Captain Holden received the D.S.O., 2nd Lieut. Cheel the M.C., C.S.M., and L/Cpl. Laing and Ptes. Russell and Taylor the M.M."

Herbert was one of the 49 other ranks eventually confirmed as killed on Saturday 23 March 1917. None has a known grave. They are all remembered in Bay 7 at the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.

Herbert's death was announced by his parents in the East Kent Gazette on 4 May 1918:

Kadwill, Herbert Ewart 23rd. March 1918 - killed in action on the Somme. Dearly loved son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Kadwill of Cellar Hill, Greenstreet aged 20 - Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Herbert's parents state his age as 20, but he actually died a month before his birthday. They have also stated that his death took place in the Somme area, which was probably the last location of action they had been aware of.

On 18 May 1918, the Faversham and North East Kent News carried the following article on Herbert's death:

PTE. H. E. KADWILL

Mr and Mrs Joseph Kadwill, of Celler [sic] Hill, Lynsted, have lost the youngest of three soldier sons—Private Herbert Ewart Kadwill, of the Royal West Kent Regiment, who was killed in action a few weeks back. Eager to do his bit in the fighting, he joined up in July 1915, when he was little over 17 years of age and only about half-way through his apprenticeship at the Conyer Shipbuilding Yard. He went to the front about the middle of 1916 and was home on his first leave last November after a spell of 18 months. For a time after he got to the front he was employed in guarding prisoners of war on it being learned he was not then 19

years of age. Following his nineteenth birthday he got back to the trenches and was killed in action on 23rd March. The other two sons serving are Pte J H Kadwill, Lancers, who has been in India since 1910, and Pte G W Kadwill, Coldstream Guards, who is now in France. Mr and Mrs Kadwill have also a son-in-law in France; another, who has been wounded fighting with the Canadians, is about to be sent back to Canada for discharge; and a third, who came home from Australia, is engaged in war work in England. Mr Kadwill himself was engaged at one of our munition factories until his health compelled him to give up work and that he and his wife have 13 nephews in the forces, to show that their families are doing their bit splendidly for their country.

Both his brothers survived the war.

Herbert was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. *[See Appendix 1]*

Herbert is remembered incorrectly on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's records, where he is registered as Herbert "Ewert" and "Ewers". In the Register of Soldier's Effects, Herbert is again misspelled as Herbert "Ernest Kadwell". It tells us that in July 1918 Herbert's father received the money owed in the amount of £15 6s 6d (£15.32½p). In November 1919 he also received the War Gratuity of £12 10s 0d (£12.50p). *[See Appendix 2]* Taken together these amount to roughly £1,600 in today's money.

On the first anniversary of his death, Herbert's parent's remembered him in the East Kent Gazette:

22nd March 1919

IN MEMORIAM

KADWILL. In loving memory of our dear Bert (Herbert Ewart), Royal West Kents, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Joseph Kadwill, of Greenstreet, who counted his life as worthless in the service of his country.

God make us worthy of those who have died,
These our loved our crucified.

Herbert is remembered on his parents grave in the Lynsted Churchyard extension.





Private, G/59971, 8th (Service) Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)

Formerly 1st Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) and

3/4th Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)

Killed in action 26 March 1918 Aged 19

The eldest child of Terry and Ellen Jane (née Galloway), Albert was born at 59 High Street, Whitstable, on 20 April 1898. At that time they were living over a pork butcher's shop where his father was employed. The shop is currently an opticians. He was christened in Whitstable on 28 May 1898. Albert's younger siblings were Winifred May, Marshall Terry, Iris Kathleen and Harold Allan. Another brother, Cecil Stephen, was born in 1904 but died very shortly after. It is also recorded that there was another child that had died but records have not been found. By the time of the 1911 Census the family had moved to Lynsted, where Terry had his own butcher's shop at what is now 132 London Road.

On leaving school, Albert joined his father in the shop but it appears he had a real passion and talent for woodwork, painting and photography. Service to others also seems to have been an important part of his life, illustrated by being a member of the Greenstreet Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade. He had been the youngest member of the team to arrive and work at the scene of the Faversham gunpowder explosion in 1916.

As a member of the St John Ambulance he also undertook shifts at the Sittingbourne VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) Hospital. Once wounded men started to filter through from France, the men of the St John Ambulance acted as sentries, orderlies and transport bearers; firstly, at the Trinity Hall temporary hospital and thereafter at the newly built "Glovers" hospital (now the Sittingbourne Memorial Hospital).



Wounded Belgian soldiers being treated in the temporary hospital in Trinity Hall, Sittingbourne

During February 1917, Albert enlisted into the Royal West Surrey regiment and, after training, went to the front in September that year. He would serve for just six months during which time he saw considerable action. As with so many other troops at this time, preparations were being made for the expected German Spring Offensive. During January and February there were few opportunities for further training, as the West Surreys were spending more time in the trenches.

It is all the more poignant that Albert survived the initial onslaught of the German Spring Offensive through the Battle of St Quentin (21-23 March) and the Actions at the Somme Crossings (24-25



March) only to fall victim to a shell, along with two of his comrades, as the battalion was falling back to relative safety.

The battalion war diary describes Albert's last few days:

Date	Diary
24th March 1918	LICOURT – CHAULNES – OMIECOURT: 7.30 a.m.: [Sheet 66 FRANCE. Appendix III.; Brigade Memo L.Q.1 and 2] As the situation appeared more secure, the Battalion was ordered back to LICOURT. These orders were received to march to CHAULNES and the Battalion left LICOURT between 7 and 8 a.m. On arrival battle positions were taken up between OMIECOURT and HYENCOURT. During the night both OMIECOURT and CHAULNES were heavily shelled. The R.E. dumps at the latter place were set on fire by the Engineers to prevent them falling into enemy hands.
25th	OMIECOURT: 7 a.m.: At 7 a.m. the Battalion was ordered to support a French attack at PERTAIN east of OMIECOURT. In the meantime, the Germans had heavily attacked the 50th Division, and had advanced and got into the outskirts of PERTAIN so the Battalion was ordered to take up a position East of OMIECOURT. The attack by then became the front line. The enemy debouched from PERTAIN and attempted to force us back by heavy machine gun fire and sniping from the houses, at the same time submitting OMIECOURT in our rear to an intense bombardment. The people on the flanks, especially on the right were severely tried. The fighting took place in the open and a very stubborn resistance was put up until the order came to withdraw through OMIECOURT. Very heavy losses were inflicted on the Germans approaching from PERTAIN but the Battalion suffered many casualties. Lt. Col. PIERS and Lieut SPARKES were both wounded. Major Rowland took command and the Battalion went back to the positions of the previous day, near CHAULNES. Orders were given that CHAULNES was to be held at any cost. So a move was made to trenches on the outskirts East of the town. During the night nothing unusual occurred except that a German patrol encountered on the CHAULNES – OMIECOURT road was driven off. Shelling was very heavy.
26th	6 to 7 a.m. In the morning the enemy resumed attacks with CHAULNES as the objective and the Battn held them up. At 8.30 a.m. orders were received to proceed to VRELY and the Bde marched over the old SOMME battlefield via LIHONS and MEHARICOURT. Positions were chosen East of the village and as soon as these were arranged the men were allowed to go into the village and were billeted in barns. From this point the troops found themselves in long inhabited regions with civilians in some instances still in the villages they entered. Advantage was taken of this to live on the land and remove material which if left would only fall into the hands of the enemy.



During operations from 21 March to 5 April, casualties from Albert's battalion numbered:

	Officers	Other Ranks
Killed	3	23
Wounded	7	106
Missing	10	259
Total	20	388

On 27 April 1918 the East Kent Gazette published the following article:

TEYNHAM AND LYNSTED MEN

Three more names have been added to the list of Teynham and Lynsted men who have died gallantly for their country, namely, Pte. Ernest Cheeseman, Royal West Kent Regt.; Lance-Corpl. Joseph Henry Ray, Sussex Regt.; and Pte. Albert Edward Hadlow, West Surrey Regt. The two last named were about the same age, and were formerly in the choir together at Teynham Church.

.....Pte. Hadlow was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs Terry Hadlow, of Greenstreet. Twenty years of age, he was a young man devoted to several hobbies—photography, painting and woodwork—and he will be keenly missed by his father with whom he had been associated since his school days. He was a member of the Greenstreet Division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, was the youngest ambulance man who assisted at the Faversham explosion in April, 1816, and prior to his enlistment in February last year did a regular turn of duty at Glovers Hospital, Sittingbourne. He went to the front last September and was killed by a shell on March 26th. A comrade who has written states that the shell killed Pte. Hadlow and two others but left him (the writer) uninjured.

On 4 May 1918, in their Roll of Honour, they printed this further piece that added:

Pte Hadlow was a brother member of the Teynham Church Choir, with Lance-Corpl J. H. Ray, whose sad death was referred to in these columns last week.

Also on the 4 May 1918, the Faversham and North East Kent News reported on Albert's memorial service:

MEMORIAL SERVICE AT TEYNHAM

There was a very large congregation at Teynham Parish Church on Sunday evening last, when the death of four men on active service was commemorated, viz., Privates G. Potts, E. Cheeseman, A. E. Hadlow and L.Cpl. Joseph Ray. The Vicar read prayers and the sermon was preached by Mr F. Honeyball. Gunner Rickards, of the Conyer Garrison, took the organ and played the Dead March at the close of the service.

Albert was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. *[See Appendix 1]*

He has no known grave but is commemorated on the Pozières Memorial, Somme, France, Panel 14. The Memorial commemorates over 14,000 casualties of the United Kingdom and 300 of the South African Forces who have no known grave and who died on the Somme from 21 March to 7 August 1918.



Albert is also commemorated on the Teynham War Memorial.



Recorded as Albert Edward “Haddow” in the Register of Soldier’s Effects”, it records that his father received his money owed, which amounted to £8 3s 3d (£8.16p) in October 1918. In March 1920 his father also received the War Gratuity of £4. [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £700 in today’s money.

On the first anniversary of his death, Albert was remembered by his family through the “In Memoriam” section of the East Kent Gazette’s 15 March 1919 issue:

HADLOW: In loving memory of my dear son, Albert (Bert) Hadlow, who died, March 26th, 1918, serving his country.

One sad year has now passed by,
Since that great sorrow fell;
Yet in our hearts we mourn the loss
Of one we loved so well.
A bitter grief, a shock severe,
To part with him we loved so dear;
Our loss was great, we’ll not complain,
But hope one day to meet again.
Dad, Brothers, and Sisters.

At the time of Albert’s death, his parents were living at “West End” Greenstreet. His father would leave his butchery business and become a fruit farmer. His father and mother spent their last years living at Jeffries and died in 1957 and 1961 respectively.



Thomas Wigg (see opposite)



Stoker 1st Class, K/35893, Royal Navy, HMS Kale

Killed by a mine explosion in the North Sea

Wednesday 27 March 1918 Aged 30

The Society is happy to include Thomas Wigg in our commemorations although he does not appear on the Lynsted Memorial. Thomas's parents are buried in Lynsted Churchyard extension and he was married to Harriet Jane Carrier of 13 Cellar Hill, Lynsted. Harriet was the sister of Henry Carrier, who also appears in this book.

Thomas Wigg was born in Frognal Lane, Teynham, on 28 December 1887 and was christened along with his brother George on 26 September 1888 in Teynham Church. Thomas was the fifth of eleven children born to William, a carter at the brickworks, and Hannah (née Mitchell), who originated from Southampton. His older siblings being William, Edward, Amy (who died in infancy), and George; his younger siblings were Albert, Fred, Rose-Hannah, Percy, Henry and Ernest. Newspaper reports of the time tell us that Thomas and his brothers were talented sportsmen, taking part in running, football and goal running. His brother Fred would also serve his country in The Buffs. He survived the war.

On Christmas Day 1909, Thomas married Harriet Jane Carrier in Lynsted Church. They started their married life living at 1 Frognal Lane, where their first child, Margaret, was born in 1910.

Thomas was working as a brickfield labourer and, as many did at that time, looked abroad for work to make a better life. Thomas along with his uncle Abraham Wigg left their families and sailed to Canada in search of work. They sailed on the Allan Line ship "Tunisia" from Liverpool to Quebec on 4 May 1911. It is believed they took up work as lumberjacks. Abraham was to remain in Canada for the rest of his life and was joined by his wife and children who sailed, also on the "Tunisia", for Halifax, St John, on 20 April 1912. Sadly his wife, Edith, died just 3 years later. Abraham re-married in 1917 and died in Canada in 1950.

However, just six months after leaving, Thomas returned to England on the Canadian Pacific Line ship "Empress of Ireland" on 27 October 1911.



Thomas, Harriet and baby Margaret c1910



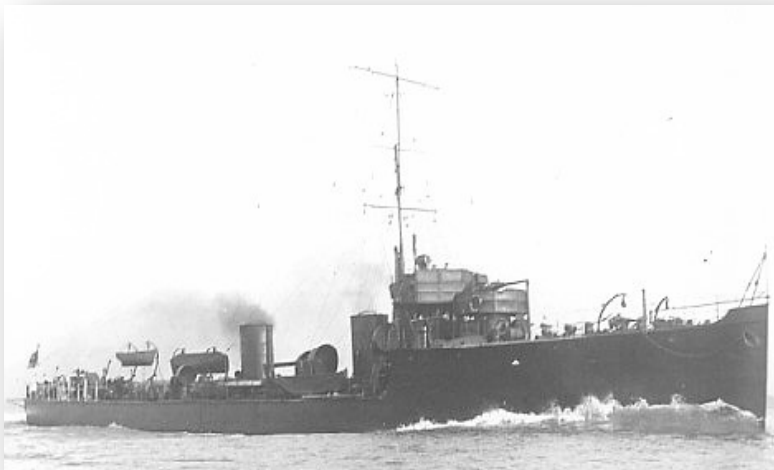
Thomas and Harriet had two further additions to their family. Edith was born in 1912 and William in 1914.

In 1916, Thomas was working as a labourer in the powder-works munitions factory in Faversham. He joined the Royal Navy on 25 August 1916, as a Stoker 2nd Class, and was based at HMS Pembroke (Chatham shore base). At the time of enlistment his appearance was described as: height 5 feet 5½ inches, hair light brown, eyes brown, chest measurement 41 inches.

Thomas served at HMS Pembroke until 3 December 1916. On the 31 December 1916, after being made Stoker 1st Class, he was transferred to Wallington, the Auxiliary Patrol base at Grimsby. He served on HMS Kale, a "River" or "E Class" torpedo boat destroyer that had been launched in 1904. All "E Class" boats were named after British rivers.

On 27 March 1918, Thomas was on his way back to port when HMS Kale struck a mine and sank in the North Sea north off Harwich. At the time the loss of HMS Kale was attributed to a mine laid by German coastal minelayer Submarine UC-11 as it was active in the area under the command of 26-

year-old Reinhold Thomsen. However, on the release of records, 75 years after the war, it is recorded that Commander H E Dennison, senior officer on the Kale, was called to a Court Martial where he was accused of "Hazarding vessel and HM Ships Exe and Waveney". He was severely criticised for steering a course which was six miles east of a channel known to be cleared of mines, and straight into a prohibited area that contained a defensive British minefield. Details of the minefield had been sent to all ships a few weeks earlier, but Commander Denison had



HMS Kale

failed to read them or ensure the information provided had been marked on the charts. Therefore, it was almost certain that the loss of 40 crew members on HMS Kale and 5 on HMS Exe was caused by striking a British mine. HMS Waveney survived the explosion.

At the time of Thomas's death, Harriet and the children were living at The Laurels in Greenstreet. His death was reported in several newspapers.

East Kent Gazette 13 April 1918 - birth, marriage and death column:

Wigg - March 27, at sea through HMS _____ striking a mine, Thomas Wigg, 1st. Class Stoker, R.N., the beloved husband of Mrs. Wigg of The Laurels, Greenstreet, in his 31st. year. From his sorrowing wife, father, mother, brothers and sisters.



Newspaper reports at the time did not publish the name of the ship. This was for security reasons and the possibility that family members of crews may not have heard the news:

Further tributes followed. Extract from Faversham and North East Kent News, 13th April 1918:

ROLL OF HONOUR

1st CLASS STOKER T. WIGG

A TEYNHAM FOOTBALLER AND GOAL RUNNER.

Mrs. T. Wigg, of the Laurels, Greenstreet has received the sad intelligence that her beloved husband, 1st Class Stoker, Thomas Wigg, lost his life on March 27th, when H.M.S. _____ on which he was serving, struck a mine and foundered. Thomas Wigg (whose portrait we publish), was in his 31st year, and he leaves a widow and three young children, for whom much sympathy is felt in their sad bereavement.



The deceased was a son of Mr. William Wigg, of Seed Farm, Doddington. Formerly he was a prominent footballer and goal runner, in which games he played for Teynham for many years. He came from a well known athletic family, Private Wigg, of The Buffs, a famous mile runner, being a brother.

Thomas Wigg was a general favourite, and his death is sincerely mourned. He joined the Navy in August 1916, and before then was employed in munitions works in Faversham. He is another of the gallant Greenstreet lads who have laid down their lives for their country.



Extract from the East Kent Gazette 20 April 1918:

1st CLASS STOKER T.WIGG.

Another local naval man lost in a disaster at sea is 1st Class Stoker Thomas Wigg, whose wife and three children reside at the Laurels, Greenstreet. Mrs. Wigg received the news a few days ago that her husband lost his life on March 27th when the vessel he was serving on struck a mine and foundered. Deceased was 30 years of age and was a son of Mr. William Wigg, of Seed Farm, Doddington. Formerly he was a prominent footballer and goalrunner, in which games he played for Teynham for some years. He joined the navy in August, 1916, having up to that date been working for some time in the munition works. A brother of his (a famous mile runner) is serving in the Buffs.

Newspaper reports inform us of Thomas's prowess on the football field. The following report of a match from 1914 confirms his membership of Teynham FC:

FAVERSHAM AND DISTRICT LEAGUE. - HERNE BAY ROVERS v. TEYNHAM.

Herne Bay Rovers 1 - Teynham 1

The Herne Bay Rovers played their return match with Teynham in the first division of the Faversham and District League on Saturday. On the former occasion, when they went to Teynham, the Rovers lost rather heavily by eight goals to nil, and with that loss fresh in their mind they scarcely expected to avoid defeat, even on the Spenser Road Ground at Herne Bay. They made the most of their chances, however, and although the team, with one exception, was the same that made the journey to Teynham, they had the satisfaction of sharing the honours with the "Lambs" - who, by the way, head the Faversham League table.

The Herne Bay Rovers were represented by:—Goal, F. Pepper; backs, H. Paterson, and F. Spratt; half-backs, S. Pullen, H. J. Walker and L. Griggs; forwards, C. Tupp, F. Hougham, C. J. Woudenberg, S. Rowden and T. Wilson.

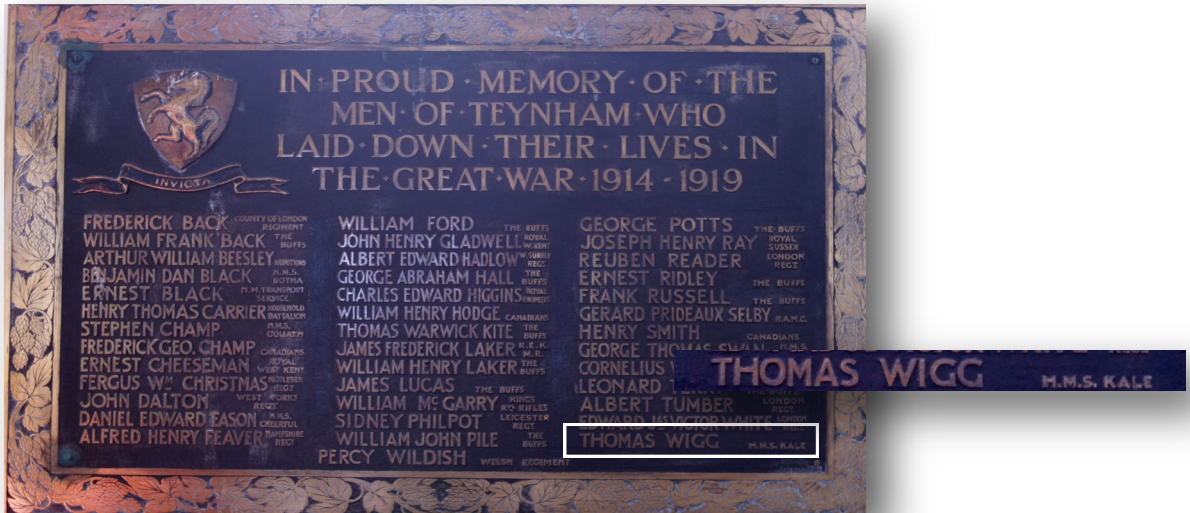
The Teynham team, which included one or two reserves, were :—Goal, H. Collins; backs, F. Main and **T. Wigg**; half-backs, F. Jacobs, Wondepeer and **F. Hollands**; forwards., A. Clark, H. Buck, **A. Wigg**, F. Boorman and C. Field.

"A Wigg" is possibly Thomas's younger brother, Albert. "F Hollands" also gave his life in WW1 and is commemorated in this book.

Thomas was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1]



Thomas is commemorated on the Teynham Memorial.



He is also remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial on the Great Lines, Panel 29, Column 3.

Harriet, Thomas's wife of 8 years, did not remarry and died aged 98 in September 1985.

A photograph of their 3 children can be found in the section commemorating Thomas's brother-in-law, Henry Carrier (d. 11 May 1917).

The Society is indebted to Rosemary Ivory, Thomas's granddaughter, for her assistance in the commemoration of Thomas's life and for allowing us to use her family photographs.







East Kent Gazette 27 April 1918:

THE NEW MILITARY AGES. PROPOSED PROCEDURE.

The Minister of National Service has issued the following notice:-

The passing of the Military Service (No.2) Act, 1918, renders liable for military service men who are above the previous military age. These men have not yet had any opportunity of applying to the Tribunals for exemption or of obtaining any protection from recruitment appropriate to their occupations.

Before any men who have hitherto been above the military age limit are actually called up, public notices will be issued and will indicate the procedure to be followed. It is, therefore not necessary for such men to take any immediate action. It is intended that a summons for medical examination should be issued to these men before any summons for military service is issued, and that the time for making an application to a Tribunal, for exemption should be after the date of the medical examination. In the meantime, men newly liable for military service will remain in civil life.

Certain voluntarily attested men, who have hitherto been allowed to remain in civil life because they were in fact above the former military age, will be regarded as if they were men whose liability for service has now arisen for the first time.





**Corporal, D/7640, Household Cavalry and Cavalry of the Line
5th Dragoon Guards (Princess Charlotte of Wales Own)**

Killed in action 28 March 1918 Aged 21

Elvey was born on 10 June 1896 at 8 Ivy Place, York Road, Canterbury. The youngest child of William Albert, a brewer's drayman, and Kezia, sometimes listed as Rosia or Keziah, (née Hopkins), who was employed as a servant. He was christened in St Mildred's church on 19 July 1896, where the register incorrectly names him as Elvy. Elvey had three elder siblings: Alfred William, Annie Sarah and Walter George.

By the time of the 1901 Census, the family had moved to 11 Nunnery Fields, Canterbury. Just three years later, in 1904, Elvey's mother died aged 44. On 13 November 1905, William married Mary Jane Fairbrass, the sister-in-law of his daughter, in Littlebourne Church.

The 1911 Census finds William, now employed as a cowman, and Mary, listed as a dressmaker. They were living in Ivy Cottage, The Street, Lynsted, where Elvey had gained a step-brother, Harry Alfred William, and stepsister, Ida Mary. A further step-brother, Norman, would arrive in 1912. However, at this time, 14-year-old Elvey was living with his sister, Annie and her husband, Edward Marsh Wood Fairbrass, a master butcher, and their three children Rosetta, William and Ernest. Elvey was employed as their servant at 114 Northgate, Canterbury.

We know Elvey enlisted in Canterbury at the outset of the war, in August 1914. If he enlisted using his true age of 18 he would not have been eligible to serve at the front until he reached 19 years of age in June 1915. He was a recipient of the 1914-15 Star. This confirms he served at the front some time between 5 August and 22 November 1914. Indeed the newspaper notice of his death states that Elvey went to France in 1914 as part of the Expeditionary Force. This places Elvey in France while still underage.

On arriving in France, it was possible that during his first days he would have been part of an inspection by Field Marshal Sir John French on 4 December, followed the next day by an inspection by King George V. December was a time for the regiment to top-up on officers, men and horses and undertake training. Christmas saw the arrival of a "large consignment of plum pudding". Elvey's long war would now begin.

Elvey's first major action was probably the Second Battle of Ypres, between the 2 April and 25 May 1915, during which the regiment's losses amounted to 2 officers killed, 8 officers wounded; 29 other ranks killed and 73 wounded. No ground being won or lost.

However, things were beginning to change for cavalry troops: although they had proved their worth against infantry troops during the early stages of the war, static trench warfare was becoming the norm. The last cavalry charges were undertaken by an Indian cavalry unit during the Battle of the Somme. Although effective, these were at the expense of 102 men and 130 horses. From then on, tanks would replace the cavalry charge. The cavalry squadrons were now thrown into short, sharp interventions, relying on mobility to fill gaps or bolster numbers of other formations. They had to turn their hands to "dismounting" to bury cables and dig trenches. The war diaries paint a mind-set that is, at its core, that these soldiers were horsemen first and only temporarily 'dismounted' to go into trenches, etc. The horses were always near to hand. The key 'flexibility' of these soldiers and their formations meant that as this period unfolded you saw them move quickly to new areas that,



quite frequently, meant they then fell under the orders of other Corps. Even when on Route March to one destination, they were sometimes called on to divert to an area of greater strategic importance or serious risk.

There is little specific information about Elvey's military career, but the war diaries of his regiment illustrate the fluid lifestyle he experienced. I make no apology for including large extracts of the war diaries to illustrate Elvey's 3-year 8-month service. These give a clinical illustration of Elvey's experiences and the momentous battles he survived. It is unusual to find a soldier with such long First World War service. The regimental war diary reports:

Date	Summary events and Information
March 1916	In billets and Training. A digging party, consisting of 2 Officers and 88 other ranks for employment under the direction of the First Army in the 4th Corps area proceeded on 29th to be billeted in the vicinity of VERDREL, South of BETHUNE.
April 1916	Regiment remained in Billets as during March. Digging Parties provided at times.
May 1916 1 st - 23 rd	Regiment remained in Billets..
24 th	Regiment paraded at 8.45pm and proceeded to Brigade Rendezvous at BEUTIN. At 9.45pm Brigade marched via BEUTIN – SORUS – CAMPIGNEULLES – Les-Petits-WAILY to cross roads just North of NEMPONT where Regiment were met by guides and conducted to billets. Squadron billeted at MONTIGNY, Grande PREAUX.
June 26 th	Heavy rain during the day. Paraded at 8.15pm and proceeded to Brigade Rendezvous at SAULCHOY Church from where at 9.15pm Brigade marched via YVRENCH – DOMQUER – CHAUSSEE de BRUNERAUT to St OUEN which was reached at 1.30am, 27th. Horses of Brigade picketed on Communal Land.
27 th	Regiment paraded at 8.0pm and proceeded to Brigade Rendezvous at the 5 cross roads one mile North of the "V" of FORET-EN-CHAUSEE – Northern outskirts of AMIENS to QUERIEU where Regiment was met by guides and conducted to bivouac in small wood North of QUERRIEU. Reached bivouacs at 2.30am, 28th.

As with so many troops, Elvey was now in position for the first day of the Battle of the Somme:

Date	Summary events and Information
July 1 st 1916	Regiment paraded at 3.30am and marched with Brigade to area near BRESLE where they remained in a position of readiness throughout the day ready to exploit the success of the Infantry if they succeeded in breaking the German Front Line. The enemy resistance not having been broken down, orders were received at



Date	Summary events and Information
5 th July	Paraded at 7.15pm and proceeded via QUERRIEU Road and thence along Southern Bank of the SOMME through AILLY-sur-SOMME – PICQUIGNY and HANGEST-sur-SOMME to CONDE – FOLIE where Regiment arrived about 1.0pm and went into Billets.
11 th	Marched to new billets in area PICQUIGNY – AMIENS to QUERRIEU. Bivouacs.
13 th	Proceeded via FRANVILLERS, BRESL, LAVIEVILLE to bivouacs around BUIRE-sur-L'ANCRE.
15 th	Proceeded near DERNAMCOURT.
21 st	Proceeded to QUERRIEU. Remained in Bivouacs to 8th August.
9 th Aug	Marched via LES ALENCONS – CITADELLE – LONGPRE – FLIXECOURT to bivouac at L'ETOILE.
10 th	Marched via LONG – PONT REMY – BAILLEUL – LIMEAU – HUPPY – GREBAULT – MESIL – VISMES-au-VAL to ANSENNE.
11-13 th	Remained in Bivouacs in ANSENNE.

In September 1916 the Regiment marked its second anniversary of mobilisation. The men and horses that sailed for France in September 1914 now formed only 33% of the Officers, 37% of the other ranks and 32% of the horses on the current strength.

As the battle continues the war diary lists the almost daily marching to areas around the Somme to plug holes. On the cessation of the Somme battles, Elvey went into billets in Frenq.

The first three months of 1917 were spent in billets and training prior to Elvey's regiment taking part in both the Battles of Arras and Passchendaele:

Date	Summary events and Information
1917 4 th April	Dismounted Party = 72 Other Ranks under 2/Lieutenant F.T. TURNER proceeded to LACRES and there billeted for night prior to concentration at SAMER of 1st Cavalry Divisional Party for attachment to Canadian Corps.
5 th	Regiment marched via RECQUES – MONTCAVREL – CLENLU to Billeting area SEMPY – HUMBERT – ST. MICHEL-sous-BOIS.
7 th	Rendezvous at PLANQUES and marched with Brigade to area about ST.POL. Regiment bivouacked at GAUCHIN VERLOIGNT.
8 th	Rendezvous at MARQUAY and marched with Brigade via BAILLEUL-aux-CORNAILLES – CHELERS – VILLERS-BRULIN – AUBIGNY to Bivouac at AGNIERS. "B" Echelon proceeded to ST.MICHEL-sur-TERNOISE. The following message send and receive:- To H.M.KING ALBERT [Editor's note: King of Belgium.] 8-4-17. All ranks Fifth Dragoon Guards wish their Colonel-in-Chief a Happy Birthday. Signed W.Q.WINWOOD, Lt. Colonel, 5th Dragoon Guards.



Date	Summary events and Information
10 th April	<p>Brigade was standing to at one hour's notice from the previous evening. At 11.45 am orders were received to move at once in support of XVII Corps, Third Army, and operate North of the SCARPE. Route: via MONT ST.ELOY – thence round ARRAS via ST.CATHERINE and ST.NICHOLAS, thence along road via ST.LAURENT – BLAGNY to ATHIES.</p> <p>The road allotted to the Brigade as far as the outskirts of ARRAS was in a very bad condition, after which the road along the N. bank of the SCARPE was not only very bad but much congested with traffic going both ways. On reaching ATHIES it was ascertained from the G.O.C. 12th Infantry Brigade that the situation was: that the 12th Infantry Brigade had taken FAMPOUX the previous day without much loss but found itself unable to advance. During the evening its advance was further checked with some loss.</p> <p>Our Line was from the POINT DU JOUR round the East of FAMPOUX to the River SCARPE.</p> <p>The Germans had dug and were improving a trench running N.W. and S.E. about 500 yards from FAMPOUX. The sunken road from Station to GAVRELLE was held by machine guns and there were machine guns along the Railway, dug in, which could fire N. and N.W. and at least 4 machine guns were located there.</p> <p>The advance troop under 2/Lt J.JORDAN reached the X-roads in FAMPOUX but was unable to make further progress owing to coming under machine gun fire from both flanks. Mounted action was evidently not feasible. There was no scope, the troops were in a regular neck of a bottle, with no chance of outflanking movement.</p> <p>There was a good deal of shelling on the part of the Germans and although good cover had been taken 5 men were killed, and 11 wounded (2 afterwards died) also 16 horses killed and 32 wounded.</p> <p>Shortly after dark the Regiment was ordered to withdraw to a field East of ATHIES and it was nearly midnight before the Regiment settled into bivouac.</p> <p>Remained saddled-up throughout the night in readiness to support the Infantry holding FAMPEUX. Several further casualties to horses from shell fire.</p> <p>The weather was bitterly cold with a biting wind and snow storms.</p>
11 th	<p>About 9.0 am withdrew to West of ATHIES and remained till 12 noon when Brigade again advanced East. The intention was that the enemy should be attacked along the line WANCOURT – GUEMAPPE – MONCH – PREUX – PELVES – MOUNT PLEASANT WOOD with the object of South of the SCARPE of gaining the QUEANT-DURY Line and North of the SCARPE of consolidating the line PLOUVIN – GREENLAND HILL. The 4th Infantry Division were ordered to secure the line PLOUVIN – GREENLAND HILL – HYDERABAD Redoubt. 12th, 10th and 11th Infantry Brigades in this order from South to North were ordered to carry out this attack. Had the 4th Division been successful with this attack it was intended that the 1st Cavalry Brigade should push forward strong reconnaissance on the line VITRY-en-ARTOIS – FRESNES-les-MONTAUBAN – GAVRELL and further to the North to the line IZEL-les-EQUERCHIN – NEUVIREUIL – OPPY.</p> <p>The attack did not make the progress that was expected, and the Brigade received orders to bivouac West of ATHIES. Bivouac reached at 7.0pm. Heavy snow fall. Men and horses very uncomfortable.</p>

Date	Summary events and Information
12 th April	Received orders to march at 9.0am to AGNIERES. Owing to congested state of road unable to leave bivouac till 11.0 am. Owing to road not being available through congestion of traffic, Regiment had to march by a hack across ground between old British and German trenches which had been fought over a few days previously. Going was very heavy indeed and the march proved very distressing to the horses. Arrived AGNIERES at 5.0 pm, and bivouacs. "B" Echelon re-joined.
13 th	Remained in bivouac at AGNIERS. Dismounted Party under Lieut F.T.TURNER re-joined. This Party had been employed with the dismounted details of the 1st Cavalry Division attached to the CANADIAN CORPS during attack on VIMY RIDGE. (1 casualty – 638 Private PITT wounded (subsequently died).
16 th	<i>Marched at 8.0 am via SAVY – ST.POL – LE PARCK to billets at AUCHY-les-HESDIN. Dismounted Party – 2 officers, 70 Other Ranks – proceeded to Cavalry Corps. Reinforcement Depot FREVENT. "B" Echelon billeted for night at CROIX.</i> <i>Remainder of Month devoted to Training – mostly dismounted, as horses were suffering from debility due to shortage of forage prior to, and bad weather during the time that the Regiment was engaged in operations.</i> <i>Oat ration had been reduced to 9 lbs on the 17th January and Hay ration to 8 lbs on 1st February.</i> <i>Forage ration was increased on 14th April to Oats 12lbs, Hay 12lbs.</i>

*Horses and men of 5th
Dragoon Guards at Rollancourt
5 May 1917*

*photographed by Lt John
Warwick Brook*





Passchendaele (3rd Battle of Ypres) 31 July – 6 November 1917

While this battle opened up, the 5th Dragoon Guards retired from the Ypres Sector, travelling west to Rumingham then south-west close to Boulogne (Verlincthun). They stayed put there from 27 August until the end of September. Given the freedom and speed of movement enjoyed by the Dragoon Guards, we might speculate that they took up this position in readiness for urgent intervention or strengthening of ground forces. As the Battle of Passchendaele continued, from 10th October, the 5th Dragoon Guards were on the move again and marched past Arras, to Questrecques, where they stayed into November.

After the close of the Battle of Passchendaele the 5th Dragoon Guards were finally called on to take an active role in a salient, south and west of Cambrai. Elvey and his comrades would be thrown into action after marching to Trescault. This is where we pick up his story in the War Diary:

Date	Summary events and Information
15 th Nov 1917	Marched via CAPPY – HERBECOURT – BIACHES – FLAMICOURT – DOINCT to BUIRE.
16-19 th	In billets at BUIRE.
20 th	<p>Marched via DOINGT – St.DENIS – HOUT ALLAINES – MOISLAINS – MANANCOURT – ETRICOURT – EQUANCOURT to Concentration Area N.W. of FINS.</p> <p>Left concentration area at 8.40am – marched through METZ-en-COUTURE – TRESCAULT and reached GRAND RAVIN about 12 noon in rear of 4th Dragoon Guards.</p> <p>51st Division held up in front of FLESQUIERES. About 1.30pm 2/Lt G.R.MILES who had been sent out on patrol to ascertain if MARCOING was clear, reported it clear, so Regiment advanced via PREMY-CAPEL to west side of Canal at MARCOIGN.</p> <p>At MARCOIGN Station, consulted with Colonel ELLIS Commanding 6th Border Regiment and Colonel KELLY Commanding INNISKILLINS of the 29th Division and found that Infantry were held up at FLOT FARM.</p> <p>At 4pm Capt. H.O.WILEY's Squadron was sent forward to try and take farm, but found ground in front strongly wired, and M.Gun fire from farm and from the east made it impossible to advance.</p> <p>A Tank which advanced to help the Inniskillin Battalion on right of MASNIERES was heavily fired at from direction of RUMILLY. 2 troops of Major H.E.E.PANKHURST's Squadron were sent off to try and get on along eastern bank of Canal, but found progress impossible owing to M.Gun fire from FLOT FARM and uncut wire. Darkness came which made any further operations impossible.</p> <p>Got in touch with 2 patrols of 7th D. Guards, operating on our right. At 5.15pm Regiment received orders to retire to spot 1,000 yards west of MARCOING on MARCOING-RIBECOURT Road. Sniped at going through MARCOING, remained saddled up all night, heavy rain.</p>
21 st	At 5.45am Regiment received orders to re-join 1st Cavalry Brigade at TRESCAULT at 7am. As regiment moved off 5 men of Capt. WILEY's Squadron were wounded, and 1 horse killed by M.Gun fire.



Date	Summary events and Information
21 st Nov Cont.	<p>Marched through RIBECOURT and re-joined 1st Cavalry Brigade at TRESCAULT.</p> <p>At 9.30am, Brigade moved off to clear up situation at CANTAING and FONTAINE-NOTRE-DAME. Order of march – Queens Bays, 5th D.Guards, 11th Hussars, attached to Infantry, the 186th Brigade, 62nd Division, on left of CANTAING. Queen's Bays advanced to BOIS DES NEUF on right of Infantry attack on CANTAING.</p> <p>At 12 noon Lieut J.JORDAN and 2/Lt CLEUGH went out on patrol towards mill ½ mile west of CANTAING and LA JUSTICE with Major H.E.E.PANKHURST's Squadron in support with orders to ascertain whether the batteries firing S.W. of CANTAING were hostile or friendly and to sweep round to west of CANTAING, and assist Infantry attack on village. Major H.E.E. PANKHURST communicated by daylight lamp to G.O.C., 1st Cavalry Brigade that batteries were ours. He sent out patrols to ascertain situation towards BOURLON WOOD and FONTAINE, Sergt WHEAR carrying out a particularly good reconnaissance.</p> <p>2.30pm: Report received from Lieut J.JORDAN that FONTAINE was held by enemy, and that we had not taken CANTAING.</p> <p>Meanwhile the QUEEN'S BAYS were assisting the Infantry and Lieut BARNARD'S Squadron following up in support of a Tank got a footing in CANTAING and held it.</p> <p>3 pm: The D.L.I. having gone forward to help the attack, Capt. WILEY'S Squadron was sent forward to fill up a reported gap in the line occasioned by the D.L.I. advancing. He found no such gap, so advanced beyond BOIS DES NEUF and gained touch with the enemy on MOYELLES in front of a Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment.</p> <p>Major PANKHURST'S Squadron, was ordered to report to O.C. Queen's Bays to assist in the defence of CANTAING, and remained in trenches supporting Queen's Bays during the night 21st-22nd and till 3.30pm 23rd. During this period they suffered 4 casualties – L/Cpl CHALMERS Killed and 3 O.R. Wounded.</p> <p>4.10pm: Received orders that Division would be relieved by 6th and 51st Infantry Division. Captain WILEY'S Squadron re-joined Regiment in HINDENBURG support line on PREMY Ridge which had been heavily shelled during the afternoon, as it was in direct observation by the enemy.</p> <p>8pm: Capt. WINTERBOTTOM'S Squadron was called upon to support a party of 40 men to act as Stretcher Bearers, to bring back wounded men of the Queen's Bays from CANTAING. These men did very good work.</p> <p>5 refugees sent back from CANTAING, stated that there were 160 civilians left there when village was captured. They gave information re state of roads etc. but nothing of importance about enemy forces etc. They were escorted back to Divisional HQ at RIBECOURT. Total casualties for 21st:- 5 O.R.'s wounded (includes 1 slightly, remained at duty). 3 Riding horses killed.</p>
22 nd	<p>Moved out to bivouac ground ½ mile west of METZ-en-COUTURE.</p>
23 rd	<p>Regiment stood to at 10 minutes notice from 10.30am. 9th Brigade moved up to support 40th Infantry Division which had suffered heavy losses at BOURLON WOOD.</p> <p>9pm: Received orders that Brigade would remain in bivouac for the night. Casualties for the day:- 3 Riding Horses wounded.</p>



Date	Summary events and Information
24 th Nov	<p>At 11am orders were received that the Brigade would form a dismounted Battalion to reinforce the front line, and that the Regiment would furnish 1 Company.</p> <p>11.15pm: Orders received for Battalion to go up.</p> <p>HQ of Battalion were established at Sugar Factory, 1 mile SW of BOURLON WOOD on BOURSIES-CAMBRAI Road. Casualties for 24th:- 1 O.R. missing.</p>
25 th	<p>The Dismounted Battalion moved off at 12.20am and marched via HAVRINGCOURT and GRAINCOURT to sunken road in E.29.a. heavy rain and rough wind. Battalion arrived at E.29.a at about 6.30am.</p> <p>After a brief rest 5th D.Guards Company was ordered to take over from Middlesex Regt. Who were holding sunken road from E.17.c.9.4. to E.17.d.5.0. with posts thrown forward. Owing to late hour and enemy snipers, it was impossible to relieve some of the posts till 5 pm when relief was carried out by XI Hussars when Company went into support.</p> <p>11pm: Lieut T.EDWARDS having reconnoitred during afternoon to find Battalion took up their rations. Casualties:- 5th D.Gds.Co 5 ORs wounded.</p> <p>Remainder of Brigade remained in bivouac.</p>
26 th	<p>5th D.G's Company in support, enemy shelled neighbourhood heavily all day.</p> <p>In afternoon owing to arrival of fresh Infantry the Company was accommodated in Sugar Factory remaining there till 3pm when enemy artillery opened fire, when Company took up a position in the open.</p> <p>...on relief by Infantry, marched back to METZ arriving 3.30am 27th inst.</p> <p>Casualties for 26th: 3 ORs killed, 11 ORs wounded; 2 riding horses wounded.</p>
27 th	<p>Brigade moved back at 11 am to SUZANNE Area. Route:- NEUVILLE – FINS – EQUANCOURT – MOISLAINS – BOUCHAVESNES – CLERY – MARICOURT – SUZANNE.</p> <p>Regiment at CAPPY – arrived at 5.45pm. Accommodation:- Adrian Huts and covered standings for horses.</p>
30 th	<p>Received orders at 10.35am that Brigade would saddle up at once ready to move up, as Germans had attacked and penetrated our line opposite GOUZEAUCOURT.</p> <p>Marched via HERBECOURT – PERONNE to BUSSU to bivouac.</p>
1 st Dec	<p>6.15am: Marched from bivouac ground at BUSSU via LONGAVESNES – VILLERS-FAUCON to bivouac ground 1000 yards N.E. of VILLERS-FAUCON arriving at 10am with orders to stand to at ½ an hour's notice.</p> <p>10.30am: Divisional Commander, Major General R.L.MULLENS, C.B. rode to bivouac ground and congratulated Lieut. J.JORDAN on winning the Military Cross for his reconnaissance on November 22nd and later in the day official confirmation of this was received and that the Military Medal was bestowed on the following N.C.O.s for their good work in the operations of November 21st, 22nd:-</p> <p>No.1803 Sergeant J. WHEAR; No3058 Lt Corporal W.J.DAGNAN.</p>



Date	Summary events and Information
1 st Dec Cont.	4.15pm: Received orders that regiment would furnish a working party of 3 Officers, and 191 men to dig a support trench behind front line.
2 nd Dec	3.55pm: Orders received that the Division would go into the trenches that night, each of the 3 Brigades forming a battalion, battalions to be ready to move by 6pm. 6pm: The 1st Battalion paraded, marched off, and took over trenches from GAUCHE WOOD to VAUCELETTE FARM, about 12 midnight. Queen's Bays and XI Hussars Companies in front line, 5th Dragoon Guards Company in support, 2nd Battalion on left. Quiet night.
3 rd	12.30am Received Orders that remainder of Brigade would take back the horses to SUZANNE area that morning. 9.30am: Brigade marched via LONGAVESNES – TEMPLEUX-la-FOSSE – MOISLAINS – BOUCHAVESNES – CLERY – to SUZANNE area. Regiment arrived at CAPPY at 3.15pm and took over same camp as it had occupied at the end of November.
4 th - 21 st	Dismounted Company: From billets at CAPPY, mounted a few working parties and scouting operations.
22 nd	Marched via HERBECOURT – PERONNE – DOINGT to BUIRE, remained in camp.
23 rd	5.30pm: Camp was bombed by enemy aircraft, 8 bombs being dropped in quick succession, 3 within 50 yards of R.H.Q. stables. Casualties: MEN: 2 OR Killed; 2 OR Wounded. HORSES: 4 Killed; 5 Wounded. <i>(to 26th Remained in BUIRE).</i>
26 th	Regiment stood to at 1 hours notice from 12 midnight 26th/27th until further orders. During stand to, Squadrons and Headquarter to be saddled up and inspected by O.C. Squadrons and Headquarters at 7.30am daily.
31 st	Remained at BUIRE Total Casualties for Month:- MEN: 2 Killed and 3 Wounded; HORSES: 4 Killed and 5 Wounded.

There was no let-up to the routine for Elvey but he did find time to respond to the Christmas gift he had received from the parishioners of Lynsted and Teynham. The Faversham and North East Kent News published Elvey's thanks in their 28 January 1918 issue:

Extracts from letters and cards of Teynham and Lynsted men acknowledging the cigarettes sent at Christmastide by the parishioners:

Corpl E T Sims

"The cigarettes, you may be sure, were very acceptable and will be enjoyed very much indeed. We never say no to a smoke. The weather is bitter cold out here now; at present time it is snowing (Jan 10th). Shall be very glad when the summer comes again, and, best of all, when the war ends."



Elvey would not survive to the coming of summer or the war's end. The next two months were filled with the usual working parties for trench digging and repairs.

With the start of the Spring Offensive we trace Elvey's last few days:

Date	Summary events and Information
21 st March 1918	<p>In camp at MONTECOURT.</p> <p>6.30am: Received orders to saddle up and to be ready to turn out at once.</p> <p>11am: Order to off saddle and to stand to at half an hours notice.</p> <p>12.30pm: Orders to turn out.</p> <p>1.0pm: Brigade moved up to VENDELLES and at 14.15pm orders were received that the Brigade would go up Dismounted under the Command of Lt.Col. M.R. HEAD.</p> <p>5.0pm: Dismounted Brigade moved up to SMALL FOOT WOOD and the Queens Bays and 5th Dragoon Guards went into the Front line to reinforce troops of the 17th Brigade; 24th Division; (2/R.B. – 1/R.F. – 8/Queens) – SMALL FOOT WOOD and Front Line shelled until 10pm.</p> <p>10.15pm: Infantry retired from VADENCOURT and "B" and "C" Squadrons took up a position in posts from Point 109 to BIHECOURT.</p>
22 nd	<p>6 a.m.: Position unchanged. Heavy bombardment of Front Line and SMALL FOOT WOOD from Dawn till 10 a.m. After 10.0 a.m. the bombardment increased in intensity and as by that time LE VERGUIER had fallen and in consequence the enemy was outflanking the trenches held by us and the 17th Brigade, the G.O.C. 17th Brigade gave the order for the withdrawal to the Green Line at BERNES. – Lieut. P.Y. ATKINSON with "A" Squadron only just got away as the enemy had advanced on both his flanks and almost cut him off – Ground WEST of SMALL FOOT WOOD was heavily shelled during withdrawal. On arrival at BERNES, Regiment received orders to march back to meet the led Horses at MONS-EN-CHAUSEE. Regiment then proceeded mounted to ATHIES arriving at 7.15 p.m.</p> <p>10a.m.: Orders received that Brigade would take up a position of outposts at PRUSLE Crossroads to cover the retirement of the Infantry over the River SOMME at ST CHRIST in the morning.</p> <p>11.30 a.m.: Regiment moved up into position. Led horses were sent back over the RIVER SOMME. Squadrons gained touch with Queens Bays on Right and 2nd Brigade on left.</p>
23 rd	<p>6.0 a.m.: Message from Cycle patrol that the Infantry were digging in 1,000 yards EAST of ESTREES CRATER.</p> <p>6.15 a.m.: Orders received to concentrate at Brigade Headquarters and to move back to ST. CHRIST.</p> <p>9.0 a.m.: Arrived at ST. CHRIST and were met by led Horses.</p> <p>10.0 a.m.: Marched to MORCHAIN, watering on the way at EPENANCOURT. Arrived at MORCHAIN at 12.15 p.m. and off saddled 500 yards N.E. of Village.</p> <p>1.15 p.m.: Shelled – Moved horses 500 yards N.E. of POTTE.</p>



Date	Summary events and Information
23 rd March Cont.	<p>5.0 p.m.: Saddled up.</p> <p>7.30 p.m.: Marched to Divisional concentration at CURCHY – regiment being fairly heavily shelled as it moved off sustaining several casualties to men and horses.</p> <p>10.0 p.m.: Enemy aeroplane bombed bivouac at CURCHY.</p> <p>12.0 midnight: Regiment supplied outposts for local protection of Division.</p>
24 th	<p>4.0 a.m.: Orders.</p> <p>5.15 a.m.: Marched to CAPPY; arriving at 9.30 a.m.</p> <p>12.30 p.m.: Dismounted Brigade was formed – 5th Dragoon Guards; 190 rifles being Commanded by Captain L.F. MITCHELL. Dismounted Brigade moved off, with Horseholders, to CARNOY where they remained the night.</p> <p>7.30 p.m.: Regimental Headquarters and spare Horses moved back to CERISY; arriving at 9.30 p.m.</p>
25 th	<p>6.30 a.m.: Dismounted Brigade went up to fill a Gap in front of MONTAUBAN – 9th Brigade on their right – then led horses going back to BUIRE-SUR-ANCRE.</p> <p>10.0 a.m.: Regimental Headquarters and spare horses marched to BUSSY-LES-DAOURS.</p> <p>4.30 p.m.: Orders received that Regiment would be required to furnish an additional Trench Party of 2 Officers and 50 Other Ranks who should hold themselves in readiness to move at ½ hour's notice. Lt. P.Y. ATKINSON and 2/Lieut D.W. WHITLOCK went with this party with 2/Lieut F.E. GILLET as Adjutant to Captain YATES, XI HUSSARS, Officer Commanding Brigade party.</p> <p>BRIGADIER GENERAL BEALE-BROWN, Commanding 2nd Cavalry Brigade, was in command of Divisional additional Trench party which was named "BEALE BROWN'S COLUMN".</p>
26 th	<p>7.0 a.m.: Captain L.F. MITCHELL's trench party joined their led horses at BUIRE-SUR-ANCRE having been in heavy fighting.</p> <p>8.45 a.m.: Orders received for "BEALE BROWNS COLUMN" to saddle up and stand to.</p> <p>11.10 a.m.: "BEALE BROWNS COLUMN" concentrated at Crossroads 1,500 yards South of MERICOURT – L'ABBE where the 5th Dragoon Guards and Queens Bays received orders to take up a position on high ground West of BRAY to cover the right flank of the 7th Corps. In position at 3.15 p.m.; at 4.40 p.m. fell back under heavy M.G. Fire, as the enemy had worked round the left flank, and re-joined remainder of Column and bivouacked for the night in wood 1,200 yards N.E. of VAUX-SUR-SOMME in support to outpost line supplied by 2nd and 9th Brigade parties of Column.</p> <p>11.30 a.m.: Captain L.F. MITCHELL'S Trench party re-joined Regiment at BUSSY-LES-DAOURS.</p> <p>12 noon: Echelon B with one man to every ten spare Horses moved off to HAVERNESS, leaving Regimental Headquarters mobile.</p> <p>1.0 p.m.: Major F.J. DU PRE, D.S.O., 3rd Hussars, Commanding the 2nd Cavalry Divisional School at BUSSY-LES-DAOURS joined Regiment to be temporarily attached as 2nd in Command.</p>



Date	Summary events and Information
26 th March Cont.	<p>7.0 p.m.: Regiment ordered to saddle up and stand to.</p> <p>9.40 p.m.: Brigade moved off and concentrated 2 kilos East of PONT-NOYELLES in support of 2nd Brigade to defend the crossings over the RIVER SOMME at DAOURS–LA NEUVILLE and CORBIE in the event of an advance by the enemy. 2/Lt T.B. BROWNE went with his troop to LA NEUVILLE and “A” Squadron placed outposts on high ground East and South of the BOIS</p>
27 th	<p>4.30 a.m.: Brigade moved up via BONNAY to support 2nd Brigade in sector MERICOURT - L’ABBE–SAILLY-LE-SEC. 5th Dragoon Guards in reserve in wood 1,200 yards N.E. of VAUX-SUR-SOMME.</p> <p>11.30 a.m.: Regiment proceeded mounted to push forward in conjunction with 2nd Brigade along North Bank of RIVER SOMME. Sustained some casualties from shell fire as it moved off.</p> <p>A mounted patrol under Lieut. G.F. TURNER pushed forward to 500 yards East of SAILLY-LAURETTE getting into touch with the enemy and capturing 1 prisoner. Later Lieut. G.F. TURNER’s troop covered a Squadron of 4th Dragoon Guards as it fell back to SAILLY-LAURETTE.</p> <p>Led horses of all three Squadrons came back to SAILLY-LE-SEC.</p> <p>“B” & “C” Squadrons helped in the defence of SAILLY-LAURETTE, while “A” Squadron held the bridge over the RIVER SOMME, 500 yards South of SAILLY-LE-SEC until relieved by the Queens Bays at 6.30 p.m.</p> <p>7.0 p.m.: The 1st Brigade went into the trenches to reinforce the Infantry in sector immediately South of RIVER SOMME. Brigade Front from RIVER SOMME to point 500 yards South East of HAMEL. Queens Bays on left, 5th Dragoon Guards on right, 11th Hussars in reserve.</p> <p>Regimental Headquarters at last house on Eastern outskirts of HAMEL. Quiet night.</p>
28 th	<p>10.30 a.m.: With view to finding out how strongly the enemy were holding trenches in front of HAMEL, 2/Lieut D.W. WHITLOCK took out a patrol of 8 O.R.s and 1 Hotchkiss Rifle. The Hotchkiss Rifle was successfully brought into action against a Hostile working party when the patrol had advanced 200 yards. Patrol was then fired upon by four hostile M.G.s and returned to our trenches suffering no casualties.</p> <p>11.0 a.m.: Intense shelling of front line and HAMEL throughout the day.</p>

During March Elvey’s regiment suffered the wounding of 8 Officers (2 of whom died of their wounds), 18 other ranks were killed, 67 other ranks wounded and 7 other ranks missing. It would appear that Elvey was a casualty of the shelling on 28 March 1918. He had survived 3½ years of war, the first year while serving underage.

On 11 May 1918, Elvey was remembered in the Faversham and East Kent News:

ROLL OF HONOUR

Corpl. Elvy [sic] Thomas Sims, of the Dragoon Guards, who was killed in action on March 28th, was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Sims, of Lynsted, and was formerly in the Lynsted Church Choir. He went out with the first Expeditionary Force in 1914, and in less than a year was one of only four survivors of the company with which he went out. He had escaped without a wound until the day of his death.

Elvey was posthumously awarded the 1914 Star, British War and Victory medals. *[See Appendix 1]*

On the 29 July 1918, Elvey's father received his money owed, amounting to £19 2s 3d (£19.11p). In November 1919 he received the War Gratuity of £22. *[See Appendix 2]* Taken together these amount to roughly £2,200 in today's money.

In addition to the Lynsted Memorial, Elvey is commemorated on Panel 2 of the Pozières Memorial, Somme, France.



Elvey is also remembered in his home city of Canterbury on the memorial on The Buttermarket at the Cathedral Gate.



On the first anniversary of Elvey's death, he was remembered in the East Kent Gazette on 29 March 1919 by both his family and, touchingly, by one of his comrades in the Dragoon Guards:

SIMS: In loving memory of our dear son and step-brother, Corporal Elvy Thomas Sims, killed in action, March 28th, 1918. Gone from our midst, but for ever in our thoughts.
Dad, Stepmother, Ida, Harry and Norman.

SIMS: In loving memory of my dearest chum, Corporal Elvy Thomas Sims, killed in action, March 28th, 1918. Gone, but never forgotten.
Harry Playden.



Lance Corporal, 5004, "C" Company, 7th Infantry Brigade, 28th Battalion,
13th Reinforcements, Australian Infantry, Australian Imperial Force

Killed in action 10 June 1918 Aged 33

Reginald was born in October 1884 and christened in Teynham Church on the 13th of that month. He was the oldest of the three children of James and Jane (née Johnson) of New House Farm, Greenstreet, Lynsted. Reginald's younger siblings were his sister Florence Josephine and James. James was also a casualty of the First World War, being killed in 1917, and whose life we have also commemorated.

Reginald worked as a butcher in his father's shop. His father's role as a Justice of the Peace meant he signed many conscription papers of local men.

Reginald emigrated to Australia on 18 November 1909, sailing from London to Fremantle, Western Australia, on the Orsova. In Australia he continued to work as a butcher. In 1914 he married Gladys Frances, in Claremont, Western Australia and went on to live at 156 Attfield Street, Fremantle, Western Australia.

Reginald enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 1 March 1916, having previously served two years in the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles before he emigrated. No records have been found regarding this period of service. On enlistment he was recorded as being 31 years and 5 months of age, 5 foot 7 inches tall with a tanned complexion, blue eyes and dark brown hair. His religious denomination was listed as Wesleyan.

Just four months after enlistment, on 18 July 1916, Reginald started out on the long sea voyage back to England on the Australian troop ship, Seang Bee. He set off from Fremantle, Western Australia and arrived two months later in Plymouth on 9 September. The next five days were taken up by a 128-mile march to Rolleston Camp, near Salisbury Plain.



Reginald's arrival back in Britain was reported in the Faversham and North East Kent News on 16 September 1916:

Reginald French, elder son of Mr. and Mrs. James French, of Greenstreet, who went out to Australia about seven years ago, has this week arrived in England with a contingent of the Australian Expeditionary Force, which he joined some time back. Mr. and Mrs. French's younger son, James, is also serving in H.M. Forces.



In November, Reginald's Battalion travelled to Folkestone where, on 16 November, they left for France on board the SS Victoria, arriving the following day at the 2nd Australian Division Base Depot at Étapes. A month later, on 12 December, he, and possibly all his comrades, were admitted to a "Segregation Camp". This was not an unusual occurrence as often troops who arrived from England, either newly posted or on return from leave, were placed in quarantine if there was a risk they had been in close contact with diseases such as mumps or measles.

On 30 December, Reginald proceeded to join his unit in the field in the Fricourt area and was taken on strength on 27 January 1917. The winter was exceptionally cold, wet and snowy.

Reginald saw much action, taking part in operations on the Ancre, the capture of Thilloys (25th February - 2nd March 1917), the Battle of Lagnicourt, in which the Australian army saw fierce fighting in March and April, the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, when the Division captured Bapaume, and the Battle of Bullecourt in May.

On 31 May 1917, Reginald was taken ill and evacuated by the 5th Australian Field Ambulance. The following day he was recorded as being hospitalised. On 10 June he was transferred to the 56th Casualty Clearing Station and admitted with trench fever¹. On 16 June, his condition was serious and prolonged enough for him to be transferred by train and admitted to Rouen General Hospital the following day.

Just over a week later on 24 June, Reginald left Rouen by train for evacuation the following day back to England. He travelled on the Australian Hospital Ship "Warilda", arriving the next day, and was admitted to the Military Hospital in Richmond, Surrey. By 17 July, Reginald was well enough to be transferred to No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield Park, Middlesex. At the end of July, Reginald's condition was recorded as fair with continuing neuralgic pains in arms and legs. He was signed off for light duties as he was not able to walk far.

It is hoped that he now had the opportunity to visit his family in England, as he was given several days of leave before reporting to the No 2 Command Depot, Weymouth, Dorset, then on to the Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill, Wiltshire.

Reginald set sail again for France on 20 October and made his way back to his battalion, re-joining them on 3 November. His battalion was refitting and reorganising near Steenvorde, a small town in northern France on the border with Belgium.

November and December (including Christmas) were spent in the front line. They were eventually relieved at 7.30pm on New Year's Eve. January 1918 was spent mainly on the move and in training. February, however, started with Reginald being promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal in the field on the 9th. The first two weeks also saw the 7th Brigade preparing for their sports day. These were obviously taken very seriously with a high ranking committee and a rule book of several pages being

¹ Trench fever is a disease transmitted by body lice. It infected troops in Flanders, France, Poland, Galicia, Italy, Salonika, Macedonia, Mesopotamia and Egypt in World War I. Between one-fifth and one-third of all British troops reported ill had trench fever. The incubation period was around three weeks and the onset of symptoms is sudden. They include high fever, severe headache, pain on moving the eyes, soreness of the muscles of the legs and back, and a heightened sensitivity of the shins. The initial fever is followed in a few days by a single, short rise but there may be many relapses. The most persistent symptom is pain in the legs. Recovery takes a month or more. Lethal cases are rare, but in a few cases the persistent fever might lead to heart failure. After-effects could include nerve and muscle pain, and cardiac problems.



put together. The events took place over the two days of Tuesday 19 and Wednesday 20 February. These two days were packed with athletic and field events, including English and Australian rules football, but also light-hearted events such as fancy dress football, climbing a greasy pole and pillow fighting up a pole.

March, April and May were spent once again in and out of the front line. June started out with a terrible blow to the men. The war diary explains:

Date	Summary events and Information
1 st June 1918	<p>LA HOUSOYE: Divisional Reserve: Weather: Warm; Relief: At midnight 31st-1st the Battalion was relieved by the 22nd Battalion 6th (A.I. Brigade). The Companies on having relieved proceeded by march route to LA HOUSOYE independently. On arrival at LA HOUSOYE switch trench of "B" Company an evening flare appeared overhead.</p> <p>Apparently the Company was observed by a pilot, who, in quick succession dropped two bombs, which unfortunately fell on Headquarters Staff including LT.COL. CURRIE, D.S.O. who had a marvellous escape, they being only seven yards away from where the bombs dropped. At the time of the accident the men were in excellent spirits, after their tour of duty in the trenches & Brigade Reserves.</p> <p>The affair cast a gloom over the whole of the Battalion. The bodies were buried in Framvillers Cemetery.</p> <p>General: Apart from this very painful affair, the day passed off very quietly.</p> <p>Officers: Capt. C. St.Pugh arrived at nucleus camp.</p> <p>Daily Strength: Sick – 3; Wounded – 39; Died of Wounds – 1; Killed – 25</p> <p>Present (Officers/ORs): 30 - 617; Detached: 19 - 240</p>

The next 3 days brought some respite, but on 5 June they started to make their move to the front:

Date	Summary events and Information
5 th June 1918	<p>LA HOUSOYE – Divisional Reserve - Weather: Sunny and bright. Move: At 3.30 a.m. Major Mitchell, "I.O" and Signals Officer left Battalion Headquarter to proceed to the 19th Battalion H.Q. whom the 28th Battalion were going to relieve.</p> <p>At 9 p.m. the Battalion moved out from Divisional Reserves and proceeded by march route VIA. HIELLY, MERICOURT to relieve the 19th Battalion in the line EAST of MORLANCOURT. En route the Battalion was heavily shelled at MERICOURT, but suffered no casualties.</p> <p>The dispositions of the Companies in the line were:-</p> <p>"A" Company front line right. Captain G. MEYSEY HAMMOND, M.C.</p> <p>"B" Company front line left. Captain Dunkley.</p> <p>"C" Company Reserve Right. Lieut. Edmonstone</p> <p>"D" Company Reserve Left. Lieut. Gaby.</p> <p>Battalion H.Q. were established at J.17.b.3.7. Ref Sheet 62° NE</p> <p>General: During progress of relief, an enemy patrol was seen to approach one of our posts. Fire was opened on the party who withdrew leaving one enemy dead in</p>



Date	Summary events and Information
5 th June Cont.	<p>front of our line. The soldier was identified as one of the 90th R.I.R.</p> <p><u>Officers</u>: Lt. A. Getty badly wounded whilst being attended to at the "C.C.S." VIGNACOURT.</p> <p><u>Daily Strength</u>:-</p> <p>Officers: The following Officers went into the line with the Battalion.</p> <p>"C.O." – Lt.Col. P. CURRIE, D.S.O.</p> <p>"C.O." – MAJOR MITCHELL</p> <p>"C.O." – MAJOR MITCHELL</p> <p>Adjutant – Capt. McLean, M.C.</p> <p>"I.O." – Lt. T.B. KEILLOR, M.C.</p> <p>Signals Officer – Lt. E.R. ANDERSON.</p> <p><i>"A" Company – Capt. Hammond, M.C. Lts Blythe, Cubbold, Wilson, Hardwick.</i></p> <p><i>"B" Company – Lt. Edmonston, Lts Bond, O'Grady, Britt.</i></p> <p><i>"C" Company – Capt. Dunkley, Lts McDonald, Skevington, Farquarson, Folly.</i></p> <p><i>"D" Company – Lts Galey, Gouler, McSher, Woods, Smiley</i></p> <p><i>"M.D." – Capt. Harper.</i></p>
6 th June	<p>East of MORLANCOURT – In Line</p> <p><u>Weather</u>: Clear and Warm. <u>Artillery</u>: During the past 24 hours, our and enemy batteries fairly quiet. <u>Aircraft</u>: Our planes continue to fly over the enemy lines and drop bombs on usual targets. One enemy plane seen to crash in front of our sector.</p> <p><u>Reconnaissance</u>: The "C.O." at 6.30 a.m. left Battalion H.Q. to reconnoitre the front line returning at 9.30 a.m..</p> <p><u>General</u>: At 11 p.m. a special patrol of 1 Officer and 9 O.R. left our line to locate enemy post. They succeeded in locating this post and returned safely in our lines at 2 a.m. Lt. McDONALD was in charge of this patrol.</p> <p>During the hours of darkness, work of deepening and widening trenches occupied by the Battalion was engaged in.</p> <p>The trenches here were very comfortable and the men were in very excellent spirits.</p> <p>Four American N.C.O.s arrived and were attached to the Battalion for Infantry experience. They were very keen and visited the line at intervals. During the past 24 hours our casualties were nil.</p> <p><u>Daily Strength</u>: Arrivals: 1 officers; 15 O.R.; Departures: 1 officer and 1 O.R.. Present: 26/607; Detached: 20/261.</p>
7 th June	<p>EAST of MORLANCOURT – In Line</p> <p><u>Weather</u>: Warm & Sunny; <u>Artillery</u>: Fairly quiet throughout the day. During the night enemy batteries kept up their usual scattered shelling of our reserve areas. Our batteries throughout the day and night kept up fire on enemy targets; <u>Officers</u>: Lieut. Getty killed by aerial bomb at No. 61. C.C.S.; <u>Aerial</u>: Both sides very active throughout the day and evening.</p> <p><u>General</u>: Brig.Gen Wisdom visited Battalion H.Q. at 9 a.m.</p> <p>At 4 a.m. Lt.Col. Curvie D.S.O. left Battalion H.Q. to visit the men in the line, returning at 6 a.m. The men in the line were having a fairly quiet time, sniping with very good results. During the day the American N.C.O.s attached to the Battalion</p>



Date	Summary events and Information
7 th June Cont.	<p>visited the line. Casualties for the day – nil.</p> <p>During their term of duty in the trenches, work was carried on, consisting of improving and digging new support & C.J. trenches.</p> <p>Rations at this stage were very good, and the reserve Company “B” carried them up to the men holding the line every night after dark.</p> <p><u>Daily Strength</u> Arrivals: 1; Departures: 0; Present 26/604; Detached 20/265.</p>
8 th June	<p>EAST of MORLANCOURT – In line</p> <p><u>Weather</u>: Warm & bright; <u>Artillery</u>: Both sides very quiet; <u>Reconnaissance</u>: C.O. & Major Gen 7th Brigade Headquarters visited the Battalion in the trenches.</p> <p><u>General</u>: At this time everything was very quiet; both sides apparently reserving themselves for enemy events.</p> <p>The troops in the line were very happy and in excellent spirits.</p> <p>“A” and “B” still holding the front line whilst “B” and “D” Companies were occupying trenches in close support.</p> <p><u>Daily Strength</u> Arrivals: 0; Departures: 1 officer, 4 O.R.; Present: 26/613; Detached: 19/252</p>
9 th June	<p>EAST of MORLANCOURT – In Line</p> <p><u>Weather</u>: Clear and sunny; <u>Artillery</u>: Our Batteries opened usual intermittent fire on registered targets, being less active than usual during night. Enemy Artillery was very quiet all day and up to 11.30 p.m. After which batteries became very aggressive and maintained a Gas and H.E. bombardment practically up to 4.30 a.m.;</p> <p><u>Trench Mortars</u>: One of our 6 Newton Batteries opened fire lasting for two hours on enemy trenches and supports with satisfactory results; <u>Aerial</u>: Our planes between 7 & 9 p.m. were very active, but otherwise quiet. Several enemy planes were observed during the day but there was an absence of activity at night.</p> <p><u>General</u>: As the result of our Trench Mortar shelling several stretcher cases were observed being carried away from the enemy lines. The casualties were reported on our sector as the result of enemy Gas bombardment although great inconvenience was caused by it to “working” & “carrying” parties in the forward and support areas.</p> <p>At this stage it was made known that an attack on the enemy lines EAST of MORLANCOURT by the 7th A.J. Brigade was to take place & arrangements were carried out according to plan.</p> <p>Casualties for the day were still very light.</p> <p><u>Daily Strength</u> Arrivals – 12 O.R. No Departures; Present: 26/625; Detached: 19 officers/252 O.R.s</p>



On 10 June 1918, the attack commenced at 9.45pm and although successful, it would be the last for Reginald. The war diary continues:

Date	Summary events and Information
10 th -11 th June	<p>EAST of MORLANCOURT – In Line</p> <p><u>Weather</u>: Sunny and warm; <u>Artillery</u>: Throughout the day ours and enemy batteries were very silent, only at intervals, very slight shelling up back areas.;</p> <p><u>Reconnaissance</u>: "C.O." and Major Mitchell visited the line during the day;</p> <p><u>ATTACK</u>: After great preparation everything was in order for the attack on enemy positions, the troops of the 7th A.I. Brigade occupying the following positions. 27th Battalion Right of attack, 25th centre, 28th left of attack, 26th Battalion support. The men of the W.A. Battalion (28th) and were as follows, "A" Company (right) commanded by Capt. G. Meysey Hammond, M.C., M.M., "D" Company (centre) Lt. GABY, A.E., "C" Company (left) Capt. Dunkley. "B" Company "carrying Company" occupying support line. Lt. Edmonston. Previous to attack, Battle Headquarters, shifted up to the GOBAR LINE. Lt.Col Curvie, Capt McLean and the necessary liaison Officers occupying a dugout in that line.</p> <p>At 9.45 p.m. (10th) according to plan our Artillery opened up a terrific bombardment, with all kinds of shells on enemy positions, followed by the Infantry who at this time were keen and determined to win. The attack was made in great style. Within ten minutes the Infantry were storming the enemy and his positions with bomb, rifle and bayonets. The centre of the attack on the 18th Battalion sector by "D" Company was carried in Gallant style led by Lt. Gaby and platoon officers. The Company put up a record show, for at 10.5 p.m., lines were laid, and communications established to the Battle Headquarters, and the situation well in hand. On the right and left flanks, opposition was much stronger, where "A" & "B" Companies had to fight for positions, held by enemy Machine Gunners. "A" Company led by that gallant and able leader, Capt. G. Meysey Hammond performed very excellent work, and soon overcame enemy gunners and bombers, who stuck to their posts till the last. There the enemy, disorganized and broken fled in all directions leaving many prisoners and dead in our lines. "C" Company led by Capt. Dunkley also did splendid work and on this sector stiff opposition was encountered by this Company, but very soon the situation was won and the line reported intact from both flanks. (Original messages sent on arrival and capture of objectives are enclosed under separate cover.)</p> <p>By 10.30 p.m. the whole situation was lost and won and our men occupying the enemy trenches, were soon consolidating their positions and preparing for any counter-blow which might eventuate. In the attack the casualties were comparatively light. The first Officer to fall gallantly leading his men was Lt. Cubbold. This Officer was grand and displayed excellent courage during the whole of the attack. Other Officers to fall were Lieutenants Blythe and Goullee. Both did splendidly. Other casualties to Officers (wounded) were Lieutenants McDonald, Skevington and Farquason. Casualties suffered by the Battalion were comparatively light, the total not exceeding 50.</p> <p>At 12.30 a.m. Lt-Col CURRIE visited the newly gained ground, and organized the</p>



Date	Summary events and Information
10 th -11 th June Cont.	<p>defensive system in case of an enemy counter attack (which formed up, but failed to reach our position) and returned to Battle H.Q. at 2.am. Prisoners and material captured were as follows: Officers 2, O.R. 173. 10 Machine Guns, 2 Light Trench Mortars.</p> <p>At 3.30 a.m. "C" Company were withdrawn from the line and the ground vacated by that Company, was taken over by "D" Company. "C" Company now occupied the old front line trench BURKE LINE, as close support.</p> <p>At 6.30 a.m. (11th) Battle H.Q. shifted back to their old H.Q. at J.17.b.3.8. (Ref Sheet 62^D N.E.1:20.000). Throughout the morning of the 11th the enemy guns were silent, but towards noon his batteries having registered on our new line began a heavy shelling on our front line system and supports.</p> <p>At 6.30 p.m. the sad news was wired through that Capt. Hammond M.C., M.M. had been wounded (sniped by enemy). Lt. Hardwick now took command of "A" Company, and Lt. Smiley was posted to "A" Company for duty.</p> <p>Towards nightfall the enemy shelling quietened somewhat and the remainder of the night passed off very quiet. Throughout the whole of the Operations, every man played his part ably and well. Special praise is due to the "Carrying Company" "B", commanded by Lt. Edmonston who followed the attackers under a very heavy enemy barrage, with S.A.A., bombs, wire, hot cocoa and rum.</p> <p><u>Daily Strength</u> Arrivals: 1 Officer, 1 O.R; Departures: 2 O.R.; Present: 26/620; Detached: 20/252.</p>

There was some controversy over this attack because the "Secret" orders appeared to have been leaked with even the men at the front-line knowing what was about to occur. It was suggested that orders should in future be hand-written and not typed by office staff. Additionally, the timing of Zero Hour being 9.45pm meant that the enemy would have seen the troops moving into their positions in broad daylight. This was thought to have been a good idea, as it was an approach that had not been used since attacks at Pozières. It was suggested by Officers that it should not be used again, at least not for some time.

There was confusion over Reginald's fate and nothing would be confirmed for many months. A letter dated 26 June 1918, still referring to him as a Private, was sent to his wife, Gladys, in Australia, simply saying he had been "wounded".

On 3 August 1918 the following report was published in the Faversham and North East Kent News:

CORPL. REGINALD FRENCH,

AUSTRALIAN FORCES, REPORTED MISSING

Corpl. Reginald French, Australian Forces, elder son of Mr. and Mrs. James French, of Greenstreet, is, we regret to hear reported missing since June 14th. It seems he took a part in an action on that date, the objective being to take the enemy's first and second lines of trenches. Corpl. French, however, passed the second line and reached the third, and what happened to him is at present unknown. It may be, of course, that he is a prisoner of war and that in due course news will be heard of him.



We hope this may be the case, Mr and Mrs French having already lost their younger son, James (Queen's Westminster Rifles), who was killed in action about eighteen months ago. Corpl Reginald French, who is married, joined up in Australia in the early part of the war, being anxious to do his bit. During the two years or so he had served in France he had been in a lot of hard fighting, but had maintained an unfailing cheerfulness. A Sergeant of his platoon who recently came to England on leave and called on Mr and Mrs French and explained the circumstances under which Corpl French was reported missing, spoke of him as "the inspiration of his platoon," and of his reliability and courage in any situation. Corpl French has hitherto come through all his engagement unwounded, but he suffered for a time from trench fever following his experiences at Bullecourt.

The British Red Cross sought information regarding the fate of Reginald, and thousands of others. A statement recorded on 14 August 1918 by a Sergeant J S Wiggins, said:

"I was T/C.S.M. of "C" Company of my Battalion, and L/Cpl French was attached to this Company. On the evening of the 10th day of June 1918, when the Battalion was engaged in a minor attack operation, L/Cpl French was reported to me by his platoon sergeant (who has since been killed) as being wounded. This platoon sergeant told me that French's wound was a slight one, and that he was being evacuated. This was the general opinion of all who saw French, but I did not see him myself and cannot give definite information."

On 1 October, Private 6073 J B Fitzsimmons, then in 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford, stated:

"He [Reginald] was in C Coy and was a L/Cpl. Refer to Sgt Woolnough C Coy 28th Battn who is now in England at an OTS for he saw him lying in a sap."

On 14 November Cadet T H Woolnough made the following statement:

"Re 5004 Pte French, 28th Battalion, AIF. Am sorry to inform you my information is very remote concerning the said man. He was in my Company at the time the engagement took place in which he was reported Missing and I personally searched for him at the time but could find no trace of him. I also made numerous enquiries at the time, and since, but could get no information whatever."

His description as far as I can remember is as follows: dark hair, full face, rather thick set, medium height 5'8", rather prominent forehead, and age roughly 23 to 27."

Cadet T H Woolnough, B Coy No 3 OCB, Parkhurst I of W"

The day after the Armistice, on 12 November 1918, Reginald's mother wrote:

"Dear Sir

I have enclosed photos as requested of 5004 L/C R French 28 Battalion AIF who was wounded and missing on June 14 [sic] 18 at Morlencourt, France. Will you please make all enquiries possible.

Your truly

(Mrs) J French"

Mrs French had already lost her younger son, James, and was obviously desperate to receive positive news of Reginald. However, the reply dated 26 November 1918 did not bring the wished-



for news:

"Dear Madam

We have received your letter of 12. 11. 18 in which you state that you enclose two photographs of No 5004, L/Cpl R French "as requested". Although we appreciate your thoughtfulness in sending these, we cannot trace the request to anyone in this Office. We think, however, that our enquiry to Sgt Woolnough, in which we stated that a "short description of his personal appearance" would be appreciated, may have been passed on to you, and you have forwarded these photographs of L/Cpl French, thinking they would help in the search. We have decided, however, to return them to you, as we find that a personal description, copies of which can be distributed to our searchers to all possible sources of information, is of much greater value to us than a limited number of photographs which cannot be handed round so freely.

If you can furnish us with a personal description in place of these, you will greatly assist our work.

Thank you in anticipation,

Yours faithfully"

A Court of Enquiry was held on 12 December 1918, with the result that on 23 January 1919 the Australian military authorities confirmed that for official purposes it was to be assumed that Reginald had been killed in action on 10 June 1918. On 24 January 1919, Reginald's mother was sent the following letter:

"Dear Madam

We deeply regret to inform you that 5004 Pte R French, 28th Battn AIF, previously reported wounded and missing has now been officially reported Killed in Action 10-6-18. We have put his name on our lists and hope soon to forward you particulars of his death and burial.

With sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully"

The Red Cross file holds a note that on 15 February 1919, Reginald's father had asked a friend to call into the Red Cross Office to ask if anything more was known. It was confirmed they had no further information.

The matter was complicated when the following response to earlier correspondence was received by Reginald's mother in a letter dated 3 March 1919:

"Dear Madam

With reference to your enquiry for 5004 Pte (sic) R French, 28th Battalion, AIF. We beg to inform you that we have received an unofficial report from 5788 Sgt J S Wiggins of the same Unit interviewed at Longbridge Deverill who states that on the evening of 16(sic) June 1918 during a minor operation L/Cpl French's platoon sergeant (since killed in action) reported L/Cpl French as having been slightly wounded. Wiggins regrets he cannot give further definite information as that is all he knows. We are doing our utmost to obtain further particulars, and will notify you immediately we receive any news.

With sincere sympathy

(Miss) A Griffiths, Secretary."



The last communication on the matter seems to have been a certificate from a Captain Mills dated 22 October 1919 confirming that no trace had been found of Reginald in prisoner of war camps or hospitals in Germany.

There is little correspondence from Reginald's wife in Australia apart from requests for information included in 2 letters informing authorities of her change of address. The letters were written within two days of each other in early December 1918, the first giving details of her move from Fremantle, Western Australia to Paddington, New South Wales. Then changing her address to Cottesloe Beach, Western Australia.

Reginald's widow married Arthur Thomas Davidson Ryan in 1920, sadly she died on 4 May 1922, aged 29, leaving a widowed husband and a 7-month-old daughter, Patty. Reginald's father died on 23 December 1920, having lost both his sons and leaving just his wife and daughter.

Reginald was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals.

Unfortunately Reginald's date of death is recorded on the Lynsted memorial plaque as 14, rather than 10 June 1918. Due to the research undertaken by the Society, we have been able to correct the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records, where they gave Reginald's year of death as 1917.

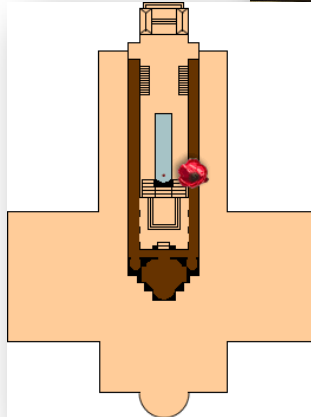


Reginald is commemorated on the Australian National Memorial, at Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, Somme, France. The memorial commemorates all Australian soldiers who fought in France and Belgium during the First World War and have no known grave. Reginald is one of 10,738 named.



He is also commemorated on the Australian National War Memorial in Campbell, near Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Reginald is commemorated on panel 113, the position of which is indicated on the plan by the poppy.



During the First World War Centenary period, the name of each of the 62,000 Australians who gave their lives during the First World War was projected onto the façade of the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial. The names were displayed from sunset to sunrise every night, and could be seen from the Memorial's grounds. Each name was displayed for 30 seconds and appeared 30 times.





East Kent Gazette, 10th August 1918:

LYNSTED MAN'S MARVELLOUS ESCAPE.

Sergeant A.E. Larkins, of Bogle, Lynsted, has had a marvellous escape from death. After the attack on the Hindenburg Switch line, on August 31st, he was reported "missing believed killed". It transpired that he was blown up and badly gassed. But owing to the good work of the R.A.M.C. he was picked up and taken down to the dressing station, and since then he has been conveyed to England. The gallant sergeant is now in the 2nd Western General Hospital Manchester, where his Lynsted friends will be glad to learn that he is doing as well as can be expected.



Acting Colour Sergeant, 511340 (formerly 4840)

2/14th (County of London) Battalion, London Regiment (London Scottish)

Killed in action 21 August 1918 Aged 27

Born in April 1891 in 3 Claxfield Villas, Greenstreet, Lynsted, Frederick was one of the six children of Walter Edward, a hay trusser, and Annie Elizabeth (née Woolett). Frederick had four older sisters: Rosetta Eliza, Edith Elizabeth, Mabel Gertrude, Lillian Mary, and a younger brother, George Albert. Frederick was christened in Teynham church on 13 May 1891.

At the time of the 1911 census, Frederick was working as a hotel porter at 95 Dover Street, Folkestone. However, by December 1914 he had enlisted in London into the 2/14th (2nd London Scottish) Battalion.

Frederick's service papers are sadly unavailable, which is frustrating given that he obviously showed potential. What we do know is that the Battalion in which he served was a territorial unit formed in London in September 1914. Just a month after his enlistment the Battalion moved to Dorking to join the 179th Brigade of the 60th Division.



In April 1915 they moved to Watford, then on to Saffron Walden in June. In January 1916 the unit arrived in Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, where they were prepared for overseas service.

The Battalion's embarkation to France was planned for April 1916, but was postponed due to the Easter Rising in Ireland. On 28 April they arrived in Cork for security duties in Ireland. For 2 weeks they were based in Ballincollig and Macroom.

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Troops of the 2/14th Battalion, London Regiment (London Scottish) practice a bayonet charge during training, 1915.

On 14 May 1916, the Battalions returned to Sutton Veny before embarking for France on 21 June. The few records that we have seen state that Frederick was "acting colour sergeant".

By the end of June, Frederick's battalion was in Maroeuil, North West of Arras. The next four months would see them alternating between time in the trenches at Ecoivres and rest periods in Bray.



Their journey through France to Marseilles began on 26 October 1916. By the end of November they embarked for Salonika, via Malta, on the SS Megantic. This ship was made famous as the vessel that carried the infamous murderer, Dr Crippen, back to England after his arrest in Canada in 1910.

By 30 November Frederick and his comrades were encamped in Salonika.



At the time of writing, the Battalion War Diaries had not been digitised for 1917 and the period of their return to France in June 1918. However, we do know the battles in which the Battalion were involved.

From 22 April 1917 to 8 May 1917, Frederick's battalion was in action during the Battle of Doiran. The battle's aim was to make a major breakthrough in the Balkans. Despite the non-appearance of promised reinforcements on what was to be the final day of the battle, the allied forces made a final and ultimately unsuccessful push. In all, 12,000 men killed, wounded or captured. The Bulgarians reported they had buried 2,250 of our casualties. Perhaps not surprisingly, the British named the scene of the battle as "the valley of death".

In this theatre of war, falling victim to disease was not unusual. It is known that, following the action at Doiran, Frederick was hospitalised with trench fever. He was firstly sent to 28 Casualty Clearing Station in Karasouli and then transferred to the No.3 Convalescent Depot, Orendzik, on 30 May. The hospital records list Frederick's rank as the Company Quartermaster. He was discharged back to duty on 15 June.



On 30 June 1917, the Battalion was moved to Alexandria from where they would engage in various actions as part of the Palestine Campaign: firstly, the Third Battle of Gaza, fought between British and Ottoman forces during the Sinai and Palestine Campaign on 1 - 2 November 1917.

The battalion also played a key role in the Battle of Jerusalem between 17 and 30 December 1917. Although Jerusalem was captured by the Allies on 9 December 1917, the fight continued in defence of the city. The allied defences in the north of the city were weak. General Allenby ordered a new offensive to push the Turkish forces back by a further 10 miles. This was planned for 24 December but postponed due to poor weather. The British intercepted a radio

General Allenby enters Jerusalem, on foot as a mark of respect to the Holy City, 11 December 1917



message that forewarned them that the Turkish troops were planning an attack for the 26/27 December. With this forewarning, the Turkish forces were unable to make any progress against the now prepared British troops. The Turkish resistance faded and on 30 December the British gained their objective.

Such was their success, the allied forces had advanced quicker than their supply-lines could maintain - no doubt making Frederick's job as acting company quartermaster a very difficult one.

Heavy rains meant that ground conditions were poor, so time was now taken to regroup.

The beginning of 1918 saw the battalion taking part in the Capture of Jericho, fought between 19 and 21 February with the aim of occupying the Jordan Valley. The area was bordered by the Bethlehem–Nablus road in the west, the Jordan River in the east, and north of a line from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea.

Still pushing forward, the allies took part in the Battle of Tell 'Asur between 8 and 12 March 1918, with fighting taking place from the Mediterranean to Abu Tellul and Mussalabeh.

Following the allied success, the First Attack on Amman took place between 21 March and 2 April 1918. Here Frederick's battalion was in support of the Anzac Mounted Division and the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade (fighting dismounted as infantry). This action was not a success and was followed by a second attack fought east of the Jordan River between 30 April and 4 May 1918. Again the Ottoman counterattacked, forcing the allied forces to withdraw to the Jordan Valley. This would continue to be occupied by the troops of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force through the summer until the middle of September 1918, when the Battle of Megiddo began.

For Frederick, however, the time was coming when his battalion would be called to France. Preparation for this move is detailed in the battalion's war diary:

Date	Summary events and Information
1 st -14 th June 1918	In the Field: KANTARA: Training. Company training. Specialist Classes – signalling, scouts and snipers, Lewis Gun and R.S.M.'s classes. Bathing in Canal.
15 th June	Battalion entrained KANTARA 17.00 hours. Left KANTARA 18.40 hrs.
16 th June	Arrived ALEXANDRIA 03.15 hours. Embarked on H.M.T. CANBERRA 0800 hours.
17 th June	Remained on board H.M.T. CANBERRA. Physical drill, Lewis Gun and Musketry Training Carried out.
18 th June	Left ALEXANDRIA 1700 hours.
19 th -21 st June	At sea. Arrived TARANTO [Southern Italy] 1200 hours (21 st inst) at 1800 hours proceeded into inner harbour. Remained on board during night (21-22).
22 nd June	Battalion disembarked and proceeded to CIMINO Rest Camp TARANTO. 23 rd June: Physical Training and Bathing.
24 th -30 th June	Entrained at CIMINO. Travelling until arrival at "US MARINES SERQUEUX NOYELLE"

On 2 July 1918 the battalion was transferred to the 90th Infantry Brigade of the 30th Division.

It is known that around this time Frederick was able to come home on leave. It would be for the last time.



July 1918 found the battalion in Serques, Pas de Calais, undergoing intensive training while in reserve. On the 29 July they were back in the field.

The battalion war diary details Frederick's final three weeks:

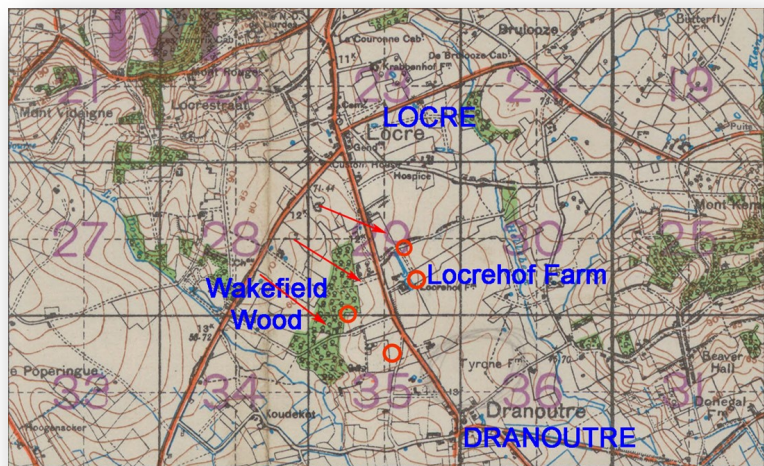
Date	Summary events and Information
1 st August 1918	In the Field: Battalion in the Line Right sub-sector LOCRE Sector with H.Q. at M.27.b.7.3. "A" Company on Right; "C" Company Right Centre; "B" Company Left Centre and "D" Company Left Company. Casualties from enemy shelling and Machine Gun fire 5 killed and 9 wounded. Battalion was relieved by 2/16th Battalion London Regiment (Queens Westminsters) and proceeded in Reserve area with HQ at R.2.d.1.0. [BERTHEN (1/10,000)].
2 nd August	[LOCRE 1/10,000]: In billets and bivouacs in Reserve Area
3 rd August	[BERTHEN 1/10,000]: Battalion proceeded to Bivouac Area at EECKE.
4 th August	Church Parades in morning.
5 th -6 th August	Companies under Company Commanders for training in morning. Specialists training in afternoon
7 th August	Companies under Company commanders in morning. C.O. (Major Whyte, M.C.) inspected "A" and "C" Companies in full marching order, and Band in Fighting order in afternoon.
8 th August	[NETEREN, 1/10,000]: Company under Company Commanders in morning. Battalion moved in evening with Brigade into Divisional Reserve at R.9.a.4.5 (Sheet 27 Eastern Half). "C" Echelon detachment proceed to Divisional Reception Camp at ARNEKE Western.
9 th -11 th August	Training under Company Commanders and Specialist Training including Lewis Gun, Signalling, Scouts, Stretcher-bearers, and Range Finding Classes.
12 th August	9.0 a.m.: Bathing was in progress during morning until 12.30. During afternoon, Lewis Gun firing was carried out, Range Finding class & S.B. Class trained during afternoon. Signalling Class under Squadron Sergeant trained from 8 – 11 a.m. & 2 – 4.
13 th August	9 – 11 & 2 - 4: Companies under Company Commanders for intensive digging and practice in the attack. Signallers & Lewis Gun classes as yesterday.
14 th August	9 – 11: Companies under Company Commanders for intensive digging and practice in the attack. Battalion moved to relieve 1/6 Cheshires in the line at LOCREHOF SECTOR. M.29.b.1.1.
15 th August	Battalion in Front Line.
16 th August	Battalion in Front Line. During night Battalion was relieved in the line into SUPPORT with H.Q. at M.22.a.4.5.
17 th August	Battalion was relieved in SUPPORT line by 2/16th London Regiment and moved back into Brigade Reserve.

Date	Summary events and Information
18 th August	Battalion practised attack twice during day and once by night at MOTH FARM. (R.8.c.90.55).
19 th August	Companies under Company Commanders for intensive digging and wiring. Battalion moved up into SUPPORT behind MONT ROUGE (M.22a) at 9 p.m. relieving 2/15th London Regiment. Casualties from shelling – 1 killed, 1 Died of Wounds. [KEMMEL Sheet 28.SW.1]
20 th August	Corp moved into assembly positions for attack about 10 p.m. taking over front line from 2/16th London Regiment.
21 st August	In the Field.

The account of the operations that took place on the day that Frederick lost his life is detailed in the following report:

Battalion moved from support line to position of assembly on night 20/21st August 1918 and were all in position by 12.40 midnight. The barrage fell at zero 2.5 a.m., and the battalion advanced under this heavy barrage and cover of a thick mist. WAKEFIELD WOOD proved a considerable obstacle but was overcome owing to excellence and pace of the artillery barrage. It, however, caused the formations to break up, but section leaders were able to reform on the far side of the wood. All objectives were gained by 3 a.m. Consolidation was commenced but owing to the fact that the right flank was in the air, it was pulled back to conform with the South Lancs Regiment on the right. The Pioneers 6th S.W.B. aided materially in the work of consolidation. Wire was erected in front of support line and also in front of Right Companies front line, but owing to lack of time it was not formidable.

Just before the mist lifted, the enemy pressed forward from the direction of DRANOUTRE, and advanced to counter attack. "A" Company's covering party were ordered to withdraw at apparently the same time as the counter attack took place, but this was not known when they were ordered to withdraw, and the Lewis Gunner remaining to cover the withdrawal was killed. At the same time the enemy made a formidable counter attack from RUMBOLD FARM to LOCREHOF FARM. The withdrawal of "A" Company's covering



Objective (Dranoutre Ridge) for 20-24 August 1918



party left the right flank of "B" Company in the air and enfiladed by the enemy's attack they together with our Left Post fell back fighting on LOCREHOF FARM, but owing to mist and the unrecognisable condition of the farm itself, fell back past the farm to about M.29.d.00.55. on the corner of the long strip of water in M.29.d.30.50. The enemy rushed in considerable force LOCREHOF FARM causing the Right Post of "C" Company to withdraw from the Southern Edge of LOCREHOF POND, establishing himself with a considerable number of Machine Guns in the farm which was then in the air, at the same time attacking along the hedges in M.29.d.80.80. They succeeded in killing or wounding the post and seizing the Lewis Gun. O.C. "C" Company, Lieut. S.E. JONES immediately counter attacked and cleared the Farm, capturing 5 Machine Guns and reached his original Right Post again arriving there with a Sergeant and three men. They came under heavy Machine Gun fire from about M.29.d.80.50 and had to withdraw taking with them their Lewis Gun. The post, however, about M.29.d.45.45 was maintained all day under Corporal DAVIS who was subsequently wounded.

Broad daylight came suddenly, the mist clearing away, the whole area being under direct observation from KEMMEL thus making movement impossible. During the day 21st August enemy shelling on our line was intermittent. From 10.15 p.m. night 21/22nd the enemy shelled the whole area heavily using a large proportion of gas shells (BLUE and GREEN CROSS) particularly WAKEFIELD WOOD which affected carrying parties at about midnight the enemy attacked "A" Company and the S. LANCS on the right. Right Post of "A" Company in conjunction with Left Post S.LANCS repulsed the attack. Enemy succeeded in bombing our next two Posts S.LANCS and established a machine gun at the corner of the fence at about M.35.b.05.70. "A" Company threw back a defensive flank and again got touch with S.LANCS but owing to the machine gun and its supporting troops was unable to aid in ejecting the enemy occupying these posts. On the Left Flank whilst this was going on "C" Company reached a hostile machine gun which had established itself at M.29.d.02.50 killing some of the crew including an officer, but the gun itself was not taken. During 22nd, shelling in support line was fairly heavy. On the night 22/23rd, "C" Company sent out a patrol of 1 Officer and 20 men to re-establish themselves in the Post Line East of LOCREHOF FARM but no sooner was the necessary reconnaissance made than the enemy put down a smoke and gas shell bombardment, under cover of which the enemy re-occupied the farm. During the evening Lewis Gun Posts were pushed out to about M.29.d.01.30 and M.29.c.99.05. In the early hours of the morning the battalion was relieved by 1/15th London Regiment and moved back into support behind MONT ROUGE.

The casualties during this action were:

	Officers	Other Ranks
Killed	2	27
Wounded	4	89
Wounded (gassed)	1	18
Missing	0	5
Wounded at duty	0	13
Accidentally injured	1	
Prisoners taken	2	70

War Material captured 5 Heavy Machine Guns 13 Light Machine Guns

After 3 years and 9 months of service, and just before he was due to return home to England to take up officer training, Frederick was killed in action. His death was announced in the Faversham and North East Kent News on 16 November 1918:

TWO LYNSTED MEN

We regret to announce the deaths of two more men connected with Lynsted parish, namely Sergt. Frederick Walter Wiles, London Scottish, and Lance-Corporal Charles Booker S.W.B.

Sergeant Wiles, after serving in Palestine transferred this year to France where he was killed in action on Mount Kemmel on August 21st. Only a few weeks previously he had been home on leave, and he was shortly to come home again to train for a commission.....

Frederick was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory medals. *[See Appendix 1]*



Frederick is buried in Locre No 10 Cemetery, Heuvelland, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, Grave Ref: B.3. Locre cemetery has both Commonwealth and German dead buried in its grounds. The bodies were retrieved from the battlefields after the signing of the Armistice on Monday 11 November 1918.



Cemetery photographs courtesy of Paul and Karen Fawcett



In November 1918, Frederick's mother received two payments of money owed: one for £7 6s 7d (£7.33p) and another for 7/6d (62½p). In February 1920 she received his War Gratuity of £17 10s (£17.50p). [See Appendix 2] Taken together these amount to roughly £1,300 in today's money.

Just 4 months after Frederick's death, on 30 December 1918, his father died. Frederick is remembered on his grave in Lynsted Churchyard extension.

In 1918, Frederick's younger brother Private, 270212, George Albert Wiles, whilst serving in The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), was awarded the Military Medal. Formerly a member of the 1/1st Royal East Kent Yeomanry, (The Duke of Connaught's Own (Mounted Rifles), George had been posted to the Balkan war theatre on Friday 24 September 1915. He was awarded the Military Medal for gallantry and devotion to duty while acting as a stretcher bearer for many hours under heavy shell fire. Thankfully, George survived the carnage of the Great War and was demobilised on Sunday 23 March 1919.



On the first anniversary of his death, Frederick was remembered by his family in the East Kent Gazette on 23 August 1919:

IN MEMORIAM:

WILES. In loving memory of Frederick Walter Wiles, killed in action, in France, August 21st, 1918, aged 28 [sic] years.

One year has passed since heaven gained
One of the best the world contained;
He bravely answered his country's call,
He gave his life for one and all.
But the far-away grave is a bitter blow,
None but aching hearts can know.







Lance Corporal, 40226

10th (Service) Battalion, South Wales Borderers, (1st Gwent)

(Formerly 13469 Dragoon Guards)

Killed in action 16 October 1918 Aged 34

(death is recorded on the Lynsted memorial as 15 October 1918)

Charles has the dubious honour of being Lynsted's final loss before the Armistice, although we will commemorate a further three who died post war.

Charles was born in Horsham, Sussex, in July 1883 to George William, an agricultural labourer, and Mary Ann (née Johnson). He was christened in Roffey Church, Sussex, on 26 August 1883.

Charles was the fourth of ten children, his elder siblings being William George, Fanny Clara and Lilian, and his younger siblings Alfred, James Edward, Thomas Samuel, Alice Amelia, George (who was born in 1892 and sadly died within days) and Ann.

His mother died in 1898, aged just 40. By the time of the 1901 Census the family had scattered. Charles was boarding in Hartley Green, near Sole Street, Kent, and working as a grocer/domestic. His father and brother Thomas were both living at Hill Side, Stalisfield, and both were working as agricultural labourers. Thomas would later move to Norton, where he was 'Second Kennel man' for the Tickham Foxhounds. James was boarding at Courtlodge Farm, Stalisfield, also as an agricultural labourer. Fanny, now married, was living at Little Owens Court, Selling, and had taken in her sisters Alice and Ann.

On 6 April 1907, Charles, who was now living at Hinxhill, near Wye, married Ellen Mary Newman at Boughton Aluph. By the time of the 1911 Census, Charles was working as a cowman and he and Ellen were living in Forge Cottage, Kingsnorth, Ashford, along with their two sons, William Charles, born in May 1908, and Reginald James, born in January 1910. The family would soon move to Tickham, when Charles took up the position of bailiff to Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert McDougall of Loyterton Farm.

We have found little information about the beginnings of Charles's military service. However, we know he enlisted in Sittingbourne in March 1916, initially into the Dragoon Guards with a service number of 13469. At some time he was transferred into 10th (Service) Battalion, South Wales Borderers, (1st Gwent) (10th SWB) and at some time promoted to Lance Corporal.

The 10th SWB formed part of the 38th (Welsh) Division, 115th Brigade and during the initial stage of the Battle of the Somme fought heroically and sustained heavy losses. The Brigade report gave a "warts and all" description of the impossible situation in which they found themselves around the area of Mametz Wood July 1916:

In these operations the difficulties of wood fighting were very much underestimated. The Divisional Orders for the Operations on the 7th July laid down a set programme for the attack to be carried out in different stages with artillery co-operation to be carried out at fixed times, thus allowing no provision for the unexpected which invariably happens in war. Owing to the dense undergrowth it would have been impracticable to have carried out the programme for the attack as laid down by the times given even had no opposition been encountered. Though



the task of the Brigade was part of a combined operation its action was more or less detached and it would therefore have been better if the GOC Brigade had been consulted as to the detail of the artillery assistance that would be required and given fuller control in the employment of the artillery allotted to his sector.

As it was artillery assistance could only be obtained after reference to higher authority which meant delay and ineffectiveness in its employment. The weather was bad, making the going over the open very heavy and the communication trenches almost impassable from the mud.



'The Welsh at Mametz Wood' painted by Christopher Williams (1873-1934) commissioned by Secretary of State for War, David Lloyd George. Though not an official war artist, Williams was allowed to visit the site in November 1916. Soldiers posed for his sketches. The painting was completed by 1917. It depicts the brutal fighting undertaken by the 38th (Welsh) Division at Mametz Wood on 11 July 1916.

were to relieve the 113th and 114th Brigades in MAMETZ WOOD; no intimation was given that an immediate prosecution of the attack was to be carried out. The majority of the Brigade had already been in action the greater part of the previous day and night. The Units of the 113th and 114th Brigades were much scattered and disorganised and no well-defined line of defence had been established from which to further push the attack. Re-organisation, collection of units and establishment of this line and thorough reconnaissance to ascertain what opposition might be expected were the first essentials before launching any further attack. These were in process of accomplishment when the order to attack was received and arrangements were at once made to carry out these orders. The Staff Officer bringing the Order was apparently unaware of the programme laid down for the artillery on this day, or at any rate failed to inform the GOC of any part of it which would interfere with the proposed dispositions. Consequently, just before the times laid down for the attack, our artillery opened a heavy bombardment on the Northern portion of the wood which caused considerable casualties amongst our own men, shook them and necessitated the postponement of the attack. The Artillery co-operation asked for was not carried out, probably owing to the delay caused by

The difficulties and delay in keeping touch and passing orders when telephone wires were cut and reliance had to be placed entirely on runners, were well illustrated during these operations. As an instance of the time taken to get through from Advanced Brigade Headquarters to the forming line it may be stated that it took the GOC Brigade going as hard as he could partly across the open and partly along communication trenches over $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour to get from POMMIERS REDOUBT to CATERPILLAR NULLAH a distance of about 2,000 yards.

On the 10th July the orders issued to the 115th Brigade



interruption to communications, consequently the attack was impeded not only by the denseness of the undergrowth but also by the want of assistance from the Artillery. In spite of these difficulties, difficulties which must occur in war, the Units pushed on and a lodgement was effected in the N.E. corner of the wood, which, however, could not be retained owing to the exhaustion of the men and the want of further reinforcements. To lessen these difficulties, however, it is essential that when an immediate operation is ordered the fullest possible information as to any action by the other armies which is likely to affect the operation projected should be given to the Commander who has to carry out the task in order that he may make his dispositions accordingly.

Casualties for the period from 6th to 12th July were:-

Officers: Killed 17; wounded 44; wounded at duty 9;

Other Ranks:- killed 167; wounded 709; missing 162.

It is acknowledged that much gallantry was observed during this advance, which was ultimately successful because of the initiative of the junior officers, with NCOs, and sometimes other ranks, taking over when officers fell.

Charles's battalion had been hard hit and, although they remained at the front until the end of 1916, they acted only in reserve. The first few months of 1917 were spent in camp getting back up to strength and training. Their first major action came on the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres at the Battle of Pilckem Ridge (31 July - 2 August). Just a few days later they would again suffer heavy losses at the Battle of Langemark (16 - 18 August).

Unlike Christmas 1916, which had been spent in the trenches, Charles's last Christmas was celebrated in the relative peace of Estaires. The battalion diary notes:

"Xmas Day. After church parade Companies marched to the places selected for dinner. A, B, D and HQ Coys dined all together in the School Room. C Coy and Transport were in the Sergeants Mess.

No training was carried out.

Sergeants Mess dinner was held at 6pm, at which speeches were made by the Commanding Officer and Adjutant."

January to July 1918 was relatively quiet for Charles's battalion. A lot of training, working parties and trench repairing was being undertaken. The first significant fighting took place at the 2nd Battle of Bapaume (21 August - 3 September), which resulted in the loss of 57 men.

British forces were now massing at the Hindenburg Line, where several important battles took place between 12 September and 12 October. It was imperative that allied forces broke through this line if victory was to be achieved and the war brought to an end.

Charles's battalion played a significant role from the first day of the offensive. He saw action at the Battle of Havrincourt where they lost seven men. A further five men were lost on 18 September in the Battle of Epehy.



By now the morale of the troops was high as the Hindenburg Line had been broken through and good progress was being made. Charles's battalion war diary best details his final few weeks:

Date	Summary events and Information
20 th Sept 1918	Quiet during the day but enemy shelled heavily before dusk. Relieved by 17 th Division and proceeded to LEHELLE.
21 st Sept	LEHELLE: Battalion had a good rest moved from here to LE TRANSLOY by route march starting at 2.30 p.m.
21 st -27 th Sept	LE TRANSLOY: Reorganizing, training, and resting at LE TRANSLOY.
28 th Sept	Left LE TRANSLOY by motor-bus and proceeded to SOREL-le-GRAND . Battalion billeted in Nissen huts. Waiting to move forward should the attack be very successful.
29 th Sept	Did not move but Battalion is placed under one hour's notice. Day spent in training.
30 th Sept	Still in SOREL-le-GRAND . Training and organizing for further efforts. All men are being trained in the use of German Bombs. The victories from all fronts are raising the morale of the men to a very high degree. Although during September the Battalion has not advanced so much as in August it has given the Bosche no rest when in action.
1 st Oct	SOREL-LE-GRAND: [Map: 57c.,S.E. 1/20,000 – V.24.b.8.8] The Battalion at SOREL-LE-GRAND. The day was spent in re-fitting and Training, Platoon Drill, Physical Training and instruction in use of German Hand Grenades being the main subjects.
2 nd Oct	SOREL-LE-GRAND: The Battalion at SOREL-LE-GRAND. The following training was carried out – Physical Training, Rifle Grenade Firing, Throwing German Hand Grenades, Platoon and Company in attack.
3 rd Oct	SOREL-LE-GRAND: The Battalion at SOREL-LE-GRAND. The Battalion having received orders to move, marched off in S.E. direction through HEUDICOURT, passed South of EPEHY and halted North of RONSSOY where Battalion was accommodated in a trench for the night.
4 th Oct	LEMPIRE: [Map: 62.c, 1,40,000; V.24.b.8.8] The Battalion at LEMPIRE. Orders were received to move to BONY and the Battalion marched off at 06.15 by Platoons at 150 yards distance. During the march the captured HINDENBURG LINE was crossed. The Battalion arrived at BONY about 12.00 hours and pending further orders rested in the HINDENBURG SUPPORT TRENCH. The Officers reconnoitred the front held by the 500 th Division upon completion of reconnaissance, the Battalion moved through BONY, GOUY and LE CATELET en-route for the line which was eventually taken over from units of 50 th Division in the LE CATELET-NAUROY Line.
5 th Oct	LE CATELET – NAUROY LINE: The Battalion relieved a Battalion of the Royal Munster Fusiliers in the LE CATELET – NAUROY LINE. The Battalion advanced with "C" and "D" Companies in the vanguard and "B" & "A" Companies in close support. The advanced troops came in contact with enemy



Date	Summary events and Information
5 th Oct Cont.	infantry at a point 300 yards South-East of AUBENCHEUL-AUX-BOIS. Here the enemy made a stand using his Machine Guns and Artillery freely, therefore, it was decided to halt and consolidate the ground gained.
6 th Oct	Near AUBENCHEUL-AUX-BOIS [Approx:- T.19.b. Sheet 57.b.,S.W] The 17 th Battalion R.W.F. having occupied AUBENCHEUL-AUX-BOIS during the night this unit moved forward in the direction of VILLERS OUTREAUX, two platoons being sent forward to occupy a Sunken Road South West of VILLERS OUTREAUX and a Quarry East of AUBENCHEUL. This was successfully accomplished and in the night a platoon was pushed forward to a sunken portion of Road on the right, contact being maintained on right and left with Royal Munster Fusiliers and 17 th Battalion R.W.F. respectively. This position was consolidated and during the night patrols were sent out who after a careful reconnaissance, reported the enemy position as being very strongly held by machine guns and fortified by all means used in modern warfare, the barbed wire being very conspicuous in its numerous belts of thickness not hitherto encountered in such a quantity.
7 th Oct	Near VILLERS OUTREAUX: Battalion near VILLERS OUTREAUX. The enemy Artillery and Machine Gun fire on Battalion front was fairly heavy. The Royal Munster Fusiliers on the right attacked VILLERS FARM at dawn but failed to take it. The Battalion was ordered to move into assembly position preparatory to attacking the ground East of VILLERS OUTREAUX in a North Easterly direction. The Battalion moved off at 8.30 p.m. and successfully assembled in its position by 00.55 hours, 8 th October.
8 th Oct	Near VILLERS OUTREAUX: [approx. T.20 & 26. Sheet 57.B., S.W]. Battalion near VILLERS OUTREAUX. The Battalion attacked in a N.E. direction, the object being to cut off VILLERS OUTREAUX from the EAST. ZERO HOUR – 01.00 hours – “A” and “B” Companies were the leading Companies with “C” and “D” in close support. Almost immediately after the attack commenced, our troops were obstructed by a formidable belt of Barbed Wire. This obstacle was brilliantly surmounted by the dash and high morale of our Officers and men with the result that the objective was partially gained. Groups of men who had lost direction owing to the darkness were collected by the Officers and taken back to re-organise. Later in the day, these men were taken forward to the objective which the remainder of the Battalion had reached. Major J.H.F. Monteith was in Command here of our troops who had successfully reached the objective on first occasion. On arrival of the remainders the whole Battalion was re-organised, meanwhile the 114 th Infantry Brigade had leap-frogged, passing through our Battalion and attacking the WALINCOURT LINE, capturing MALINCOURT and passing through the WALINCOURT LINE with but very little opposition from the enemy. At 16.00 hours the Battalion moved off by Companies in Artillery formation in a N.E. direction, on arrival at a point about one mile S.E. of MALINCOURT, the Battalion halted and dug in, staying there for the night.
9 th Oct	[approx.. U.13. Sheet 57.b, S.W]: The Battalion one mile S.E. of MALINCOURT. The 33 rd Division, having passed through our Division in pursuit of the enemy, our Division were thus placed in Support with orders to move at one hour's notice. No orders being received during the day, the Battalion spent the night in the same position.



Date	Summary events and Information												
10 th Oct	Near MILANCOURT [approx. U.13 Sheet 57.b, S.W.]: The Battalion one mile S.E. of MILANCOURT. Orders having been received to advance, the Battalion passed the Starting Point at 15.30 hours en-route for CLARY. On arrival at this village, it was noted that many French civilians had defied the German order to evacuate. The civilians gave our troops a very enthusiastic reception, the tricolour being very conspicuous. Billets were occupied in CLARY at which place our troops stayed for the night.												
11 th Oct	CLARY [O.17. Sheet 57.b, S.W.]: The Battalion at CLARY. The Battalion spent the day in this village, chiefly resting. In presence of our Brigadier-General (Brigadier-General H. De Pree), Lt.-Colonel A.L. Brown (under whose command the Battalion had been during the present operations) addressed each Company separately, thanking all ranks for their great and untiring efforts which were rewarded by the capture of ground to a depth of 12 miles, held by the enemy since 1914.												
12 th Oct	<p>CLARY, O.17. Sheet 57.b, S.W.: The Battalion at CLARY. The Battalion left CLARY at 10.45 hours for TROISVILLE, passing BERTY en-route. On arrival at TROISVILLE at 12.30 hours, and alarm Post was fixed upon and all concerned warned. The Battalion then entered billets at TROISVILLE at which place the night was spent.</p> <p>It may be here stated in a brief summary of our operations from the 1st inst. that the results achieved were greater than had ever before been the case with this front. Apart from huge military stores and material captured from the enemy, the enemy's best fortifications were wrested from him. This includes the much vaunted HINDENBURG LINE the invincibility of which he had openly boasted to the world. Artillery pieces and numerous Machine Guns were also captured. The prisoners captured shewed good morale throughout the operations. The total number captured by this [point] cannot be determined owing to the liquid state of the battle area, prisoners being passed to rear units as soon as captured. The loss of the undermentioned Officers and 196 O.R.s as killed and wounded is deeply regretted but sacrifices were willingly given in the true British spirit and perhaps, the happiest period of the advance occurred when the French civilians were released from the enemy's unscrupulous treatment. Lt. Colonel A.L. Bowen and all Officers & O.R.s of the Battalion were highly praised by the Divisional Commander for brilliant leadership and spirit of determination shewn, particularly in the attack on VILLERS OUTREUX which was successfully taken.</p> <p>Only after very trying difficulties both for the Leaders and the men (the most trying being the re-organizing of the Battalion during the attack on the village) had been overcome.</p> <p>The Officer casualties above referred to are:</p> <table> <tr> <td>Capt. J.A. Jones</td><td>Killed in Action</td></tr> <tr> <td>Lieut. R.H. Jones</td><td>Killed in Action</td></tr> <tr> <td>2/Lt. D. Jones</td><td>Killed in Action</td></tr> <tr> <td>Capt. J.R. England</td><td>Wounded in Action</td></tr> <tr> <td>2/Lt. W.F. Roberts, M.C.</td><td>Wounded in Action</td></tr> <tr> <td>2/Lt. G.W. Rainer</td><td>Wounded in Action</td></tr> </table>	Capt. J.A. Jones	Killed in Action	Lieut. R.H. Jones	Killed in Action	2/Lt. D. Jones	Killed in Action	Capt. J.R. England	Wounded in Action	2/Lt. W.F. Roberts, M.C.	Wounded in Action	2/Lt. G.W. Rainer	Wounded in Action
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2/Lt. W.F. Roberts, M.C.	Wounded in Action												
2/Lt. G.W. Rainer	Wounded in Action												



Date	Summary events and Information
12 th Oct Cont.	<div>2/Lt. J.W. Capp Wounded in Action</div> <div>2/Lt. J.S. Wanson Wounded in Action</div> <div>2/Lt. J.G. Williams Wounded in Action</div>
13 th Oct:	<p>TROISVILLE [Sheet 57.b., N.E.]: The Battalion at TROISVILLE. At 16.45 hours, the Battalion proceeded to the Line, relieving a unit of the 33rd Division in sector of 1½ miles N.E. of LE CATEAU. This was completed successfully, whereupon, the Commanding Officer, Major A.R. Sykes, M.C., re-organised his front, placing "A" & "D" Companies in Front Line holding the Bridge Heads crossing the River SELLE. "B" & "C" Companies were placed in Support and reserve respectively. The re-organization was successfully carried out, there being no casualties. The 2nd R.W.F. were on our RIGHT and the 51st Brigade on our LEFT.</p>
14 th Oct	<p>19.b.2.9. [Sheet 57b]: The Battalion in the Line.</p> <p>There was no change on the Battalion Front during the night. With the exception of constant shelling of Battalion Headquarters which was situate at VAMBOURLIEUX FARM, the day passed away without incident of importance.</p> <p>In the afternoon the 51st Brigade on our left reported the evacuation by the enemy of NEUVILLY and BRIASTRE.</p> <p>"C" & "B" Companies worked under the direction of the C.R.E. during the night, digging trenches.</p> <p>The Brigade on our left were relieved during the night with the result that a Battalion of the East Yorks linked up on our left Flank.</p>

We now reach the time of Charles's death. Neither the battalion nor brigade diaries help us identify exactly when or where he was killed. Although a newspaper reports Charles died on 15 October, all official documents record his death as 16 October. Two possibilities present themselves: he was killed in the limited shelling of 10th SWB HQ, or the inter-Company reliefs that exposed him to sniper fire. The latter option is well documented on other occasions.

The battalion diary reads:

Date	Summary events and Information
15 th Oct	<p>K.19.b.2.9. [Sheet 57.b]: The Battalion in the Line. Patrols reported the enemy as holding the Railway Embankment opposite our sector, in strength, being plentifully supplied with Machine Guns which are particularly active at night. The day passed away normally, Battalion Headquarters being the enemy's chief objective, this he shelled persistently with 77 & 105 M.M. shells.</p>
16 th Oct	<p>K.19.b.2.9 [Sheet 57b]: The Battalion in the Line. Apart from the shelling of Battalion Headquarters with 77 m.m. and 15 c.m. shells, the enemy was quieter than usual. During the day, Inter-Company reliefs were carried out successfully, "B" Company relieving "D" Company and "C" Company relieving "A". "B" and "C" Companies becoming Right and Left Front-Companies respectively and "D" and "A" Companies support and Reserve, respectively.</p>



Charles was one of two men from 10th SWB to die that day. Just 26 days later the war would end.

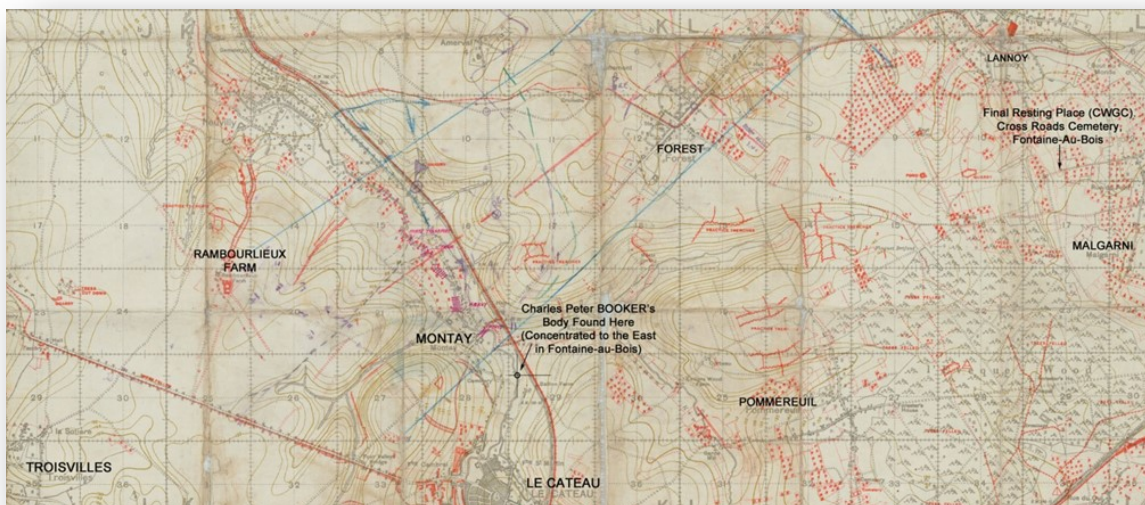
On 16 November 1918 the Faversham and North East Kent News reported his death:

TWO LYNSTED MEN

We regret also to record the deaths of two more men connected with Lynsted parish, namely, Sergt. Frederick Walter Wiles, London Scottish, and Lance-Corporal Charles Booker, S.W.B.

..... Lance-Corporal Booker was for seven years Bailiff to Colonel MacDougall at Loyterton. The Sergeant of his platoon who wrote conveying the news of his death, stated that he was killed instantaneously on the night of October 15th. The Sergeant added: "All the boys and myself miss him very much as he was well liked in the Company. I found him one of the very best soldiers, who always did his duty with good cheer." Deceased was 34 years of age and leaves a wife and two children.

In 1920 Charles was exhumed from his original resting place (shown on map below) and reburied in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Cross Roads Cemetery, Rue du Pont, Fontaine-au-Bois, Nord, France, Grave Ref: II. G. 20.



Charles's headstone reads "Until the day break and the shadows flee away."



It is possible that Charles is the "C P Booker" remembered on the Portslade and West Hove War Memorial in Sussex. This is likely, as his father returned to Sussex after the war, where he died in 1928.

Charles was posthumously awarded the British War and Victory Medals. *[See Appendix 1]*

In January 1919 his wife was paid his money owed of £21 0s 5d (£21.02p), which included his £12 War Gratuity. *[See Appendix 2]* Taken together these amount to roughly £1,075 in today's money.

Ellen, who was still living in Upper Tickham, re-married in 1920 to Frederick Linkin, who had also served in the war. In 1921 Ellen gave birth to another son, Arthur Frederick. They later moved to 4 Sunny Side, The Street, Doddington. Ellen died in 1972, aged 84.



East Kent Gazette, 19 October 1918:

GREENSTREET. LABOUR AND THE WAR.

At a branch meeting of the members of the Greenstreet Branch of the Workers' Union, the following resolution was passed: "That this, the Greenstreet Branch of the Workers' Union, earnestly requests the Government to refuse negotiating for peace with any of the present Central Governments as now constituted, and expresses the hope that the complete surrender of the enemy, and nothing short of this shall be the first steps to such negotiations."



The Communique to the British Public from Prime Minister David Lloyd George on 11 November 1918:

“The Armistice was signed at five o'clock this morning, and hostilities are to cease on all fronts at 11 a.m. to-day.”

Went the day well?
We died and never knew.

But, well or ill,
Freedom, we died for you.

When you go home, tell them of us and say,
For your tomorrows these gave their today.

John Maxwell Edmonds



The Faversham and North East Kent News, 30 November 1918:

LYNSTED MAN'S D.S.M.

At the Royal Naval Hospital, Chatham, the other day, in the presence of the Royal Naval Sick Berth Staff and Reserve, Mr Ernest George Seagers, of Lynsted, was presented by Surgeon Rear-Admiral Handyside R.N., with the Distinguished Service Medal for meritorious work under very heavy shell fire and also for devotion to duty in nursing the sick and wounded during the great advance to Baghdad in 1917. In connection with that trying time it may be mentioned that for five days during that period there were eighty wounded men, including the medical officer himself, in the sole charge of Mr. E. Seagers.



1919

East Kent Gazette extracts

18 January 1919:

LYNSTED

The children attending Lynsted Council School have contributed to various War Funds, through Mr. T.L. Ackerman, the sum of £16/3/4, and in addition the girls of the mixed school have worked hard for the men at the front by knitting 100 pairs of cuffs during the year. Besides these the teachers have sent many pairs of socks worked by themselves.

21 June 1919:

WAR MEMORIALS

LYNSTED

Lynsted's war memorial is to take the form of a marble tablet to be placed in the Parish Church containing the names and the units of the men belonging to the parish who have fallen. A committee, comprising the Vicar (Chairman of the Parish Council) and Messrs D.R.Dixon, T L Ackerman, G W George and F Dalton, has been appointed to raise funds. The tablet will have to be of fair size, as there are upwards of thirty names to be inscribed upon it. The cost is estimated at about £300 and subscriptions to about half that sum are already promised.

26 July 1919:

PEACE CELEBRATIONS IN THE VILLAGES

LYNSTED.

Lynsted Park (lent by Mr Pilcher) was the scene of Lynsted's celebrations, which included tea for all parishioners and also for the outside children attending Lynsted School and their parents. Another great feature was the sports organised by a committee, under the energetic superintendence of Mr Ferris, and in which nearly £30 was awarded in prizes. At dusk there was a display of fireworks (provided by Mr Mercer), and also a bonfire, these taking place in a part of the Park in the occupation of Mr Smith who granted its use. Mrs Sewell and Dr Henderson shared the ceremony of distributing the sports prizes.





Lance Corporal, D/20552, "B" Squadron, 4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards

Previously Private, D/6814, 7th (The Princess Royal's) Dragoon Guards

Died of illness brought on by war 31 October 1919 Aged 30

(death is recorded on the Lynsted memorial as 31 October 1918)

Edward was born in Throwley on 20 May 1889 to Henry Thomas, an agricultural labourer originally from Whitstable, and Emily (née Wilkinson) originally from Boughton-under-Blean. The family was living at Forge Farm, The Lees, Badlesmere, but would later move to Newnham Road, Eastling, and later, Newnham Street, Newnham.

Edward who was christened in Throwley Church on 30 June 1889, was the second youngest of nine children. His older siblings were Percy William, Thomas, Fanny, Jane, Henry, Kate and James. His younger sibling was Edith.

In November 1905, Edward enlisted via The Buffs recruitment process at Canterbury, and allocated to "Dragoons of the Line". He was deemed medically fit for service on 20 November 1905 and registered as Private 6814 to 7th (The Princess Royal's) Dragoon Guards.

The terms of the Short Service Attestation meant he had signed up for 12 years, seven years of which would be in Army Service and the remaining five years in reserve. The attestation describes Edward as a farm labourer, 5 feet 4 inches tall with a fresh complexion, grey eyes and brown hair. It also states he was 18 years and 6 months old. Edward was in fact just 16 years and 6 months old.

Edward's military service started in Canterbury. On 15 March 1907 he obtained his "Army Certificate of Education Third Class". This was comprised of education and examination in elementary geometry, practical measurement, applications of money and English. After 2 years' service, on 20 November 1907, he was awarded a Good-Conduct Badge. This was an award for Privates and Lance Corporals serving in the Regular Army. The award was shown by a chevron worn on the lower sleeve of the uniform jacket. On the same day he was also granted an S.P. Class I, a special payment of 6d (2½p).

Following a medical at Canterbury on 11 September 1908, Edward was declared "disease free and fit for service in Egypt". On 17 September 1908, Edward set sail for Cairo. Just a month later, on 2 October, Edward was admitted to the Military Hospital in Cairo, where he spent 38 days suffering from "disease" being treated with "pure carbolic and hydrating butter". He was discharged from the hospital on 26 November. At the beginning of 1909 Edward's father died. We have found no evidence that Edward was allowed home leave at this sad time.

Edward was re-admitted to the Cairo Military Hospital on 23 May 1909 suffering from heat stroke. After treatment with ice he was discharged nine days later only to be re-admitted on 28 August suffering from Sand Fly fever. Edward spent 11 days in the hospital with fever and severe headaches. He was discharged on 7 September. Just 23 days later he was declared "fit for service in India". Four days later, on 3 October 1910 he sailed for India on H T Dongola, landing on 12 October 1910. Here he would serve until April 1912 when he returned home and was placed voluntarily in reserve.

After 2 years and 122 days at home, war was declared on 4 August 1914 and the following day Edward was mobilised and travelled to report to the 4th Cavalry Depot in Newport. This depot was



the base for the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th Dragoon Guards and it was here, on the 19 August 1914, Edward was posted into the 4th Dragoon Guards Reserves. On 15 September 1914, Edward embarked for France.

Prior to Edward's embarkation, his regiment had left for France on 15 August 1914. Concentrated at Harmignies, they went into the line only seven days after landing in France. The objective being to halt German progress west of Reims. They moved rapidly to Ermenonville on 2 September in response to reports the German Guards Cavalry had got round to the rear of our troops. On hearing the 4th Dragoon Guards were arriving, the Germans beat a hasty retreat!

In contrast with later years of largely fixed position fighting, these early days were marked by rapid movements, attacks and counter-attacks. There was an expectation that movement was still possible using the existing formations and tactics. Cavalry units were employed especially as reinforcing and relief formations. The fighting in September/October 1914 was later described as the "Race to the Sea" as the Germans and Allies struggled for ascendancy without risking a major flanking action. Indeed, when Edward joined his regiment in the field on 4 October 1914, his first 16 days saw him back the 200 miles he had just travelled to join them.

The regimental war diary describes this time:

Date	Summary events and Information
4 th Oct 1914	Quiet day. Handed over to Northumberland Fusiliers at dark, returned to VASSENEY. Reinforcement of 1 officer, 185 other ranks and 214 horses joined. Moved at 8.30 p.m. to billets at HARTENNES via COUVRELLES – NAMPTUIL.
5 th Oct	Transport moved at 4.30 p.m. Regiment at 6.15 p.m. to the area VEZ-LARGNY via FLEURY as these villages were occupied we went into bivouac in the grounds of the Chateau at COYOLLES.
6 th Oct	Marched at 1 p.m. via CREPYEN VALOIS BEIHSY – LACOIX – St. OUVEN – JON QUIERES to LACHELLES at 8.0 p.m.
7 th Oct	Orders to march at 9.0 a.m. to the area SAUVILLERS-MONGIVAL, moved via BELLEVUE VAVMONT – MONTDIDIER. Orders received to a position readiness one mile North East of that place to support the French who were being hard pressed. Assistance not required so moved into billets at AUBVILLERS about 7.0 p.m.
8 th Oct	Marched at 10.0 a.m. to VILLERS BOCAGE via MOREUIL – BOUES – AMIENS.
9 th Oct	Marched at 9.0 a.m. to LE SOUCHE via PUCHEU – VILLERS – THIEVRES – MALLOY arrived billets about 4.0 p.m.
10 th Oct	Marched at 9.15 a.m. via ETPEEMAIZIERES to billets at BETHONSART.
11 th Oct	Marched at 8.15 a.m. to GONNEHEM via HOUDAIN BRUAY – CHOCQUES arriving there about 1 p.m. Advanced Guard, 3rd Infantry Division, passed through about 1.40 p.m. Moved on to MERVILLE via ST. VENANT, after dark took up outposts along the East side of the FORET DENIEPLE. Difficulty in getting into position owing to lack of maps. A bad night.
12 th Oct	At daylight, as advance guard Regiment, we were ordered to push a reconnaissance to BAILLEUL – STEENWERCK. The enemy were found in strength along the line VIEUX BERQUIN – NEUF BERQUIN. The Brigade was concentrated about VERTERUE at 9.30 a.m.



Date	Summary events and Information
12 th Oct Cont.	At 12.30 p.m. we pushed on as advance guard to STRAZEELE. The enemy were in strength about MERRIS and METEREN. At dusk the infantry took up the outposts through STRAZELLE. We went into billets South of PRADELLES. Captain Ramsey, 22nd
13 th Oct	Paraded at 6.30 a.m. Moved up to FRADELLES. Remained there until 10.0 a.m. To cross -roads ½ mile South East of ROUGCROIX. From thence to FLETRE and 1 mile North. Very wet day. To billets in FLETRE.
14 th Oct	Marched at 6.30 a.m. to rendezvous 1 mile north of billets. From there via St.JANS to MONT NOIR. This portion we were ordered to hold but were shortly moved on to MONT ROUGE. Billeted at MONT VIDAIGNE at dusk. Reinforcements of 1 officer, 46 men, 49 horses.
15 th Oct	Ready to march at 7.0 a.m. In readiness to move all day but did not leave billets.
16 th Oct	Left billets at 2.30 a.m. advance guard to Brigade. Marched to NUEVE EGLISE from there to POLEG-STEERT. Took over from the Bays. Advanced by bounds on foot towards LE BIZET, HOUPLINE and FRENCHIE. Street fighting offered by cyclists. Thick fog in morning up to 2 p.m. "B" & "A" Squadron took over a section of the outposts from LE BIZET to PONT ROUGE. Reserve at PLOEGSTEERT. Thick fog, very heavy firing in front of "A" Squadron about 7 p.m.
17 th Oct	"A" Squadron and machine guns engaged in the morning 1st Brigade took over about 11 o'clock attack ordered against the section LE TOQUET-HOULINES by 2nd Cavalry Brigade. "C" covered the left and with Major Solly-Flood reconnoitred all the Bridges from PONT de NIEPPE to HOULINES. Returned to billets at NEUVE EGLISE after dusk. "C" Squadron at 2 a.m. on relief by Infantry.
18 th Oct	Regiment less "C" Squadron marched at 6.30 a.m. to a position of readiness South West of PLOEGSTEERT. Remained in woods for cover from hostile aircraft all day. At night 4th Div. GAS took over outposts at St.YVES.
19 th Oct	Relieved by 1st Cavalry Brigade. Went into farms behind St.YVES. Went into billets at NEUVE EGLISE at dusk.

At some time over 20/21 October, just 16 days into his war service, Edward received his first injury. The war diary continues:

Date	Summary events and Information
20 th Oct	Turned out at 6.0 a.m. and marched to St.YVES about 11.0 a.m. ordered to support the 18th Hussars at the eastern edge of the BOIS de PLOEGSTEERT at which place we found they had been driven in. Remained on outpost all night.
21 st Oct	The Infantry Battalion on our right at GHEER was rushed and lost the village in the early hours of the morning, the enemy working round to the right rear of the Regiment, bringing up two machine guns. A hundred men of the Essex Regiment which we sent to restore the situation lost their Officers and failed to do so. A Squadron of the 9th Lancers which was sent to our support lost two troops from shell



Date	Summary events and Information
21 st Oct Cont.	fire en-route, despite this however the two remaining troops got into position on our right and stopped the enemy's turning movement, the enemy then attacked all along the line held by the Regiment, which maintained its position until reinforced by the Somerset Light Infantry who retook GHEER in the face of great opposition. Very heavy shelling and Infantry fire continued until night-fall when the regiment was relieved and retire WYSTHAETE.

Edward had received a shrapnel wound to his left shoulder and was suffering effects of inhaling Lyddite. This was an explosive, predominantly used by the British Forces and was composed of picric acid the fumes of which was an irritant to the lungs. Edward was taken by the No. 3 Cavalry Field Ambulance to the No.2 Clearing Hospital at Bailleul. He was then transferred by No.1 Ambulance Train No.8 General Hospital in Rouen where he was admitted on 26 October. On the 29 October he was transferred to the Convalescent Camp where he stayed for two days before reporting to the Base Remount Depot in Rouen on 31 October. Edward was back with his regiment in the field on 24 November 1914.

At this time the fighting began increasingly to be characterised by trench warfare and the role of mounted troops diminished, other than in their ability to mobilise over large distances to meet critical need.

We know that Edward was appointed Paid Lance Corporal in the field on 22 September 1915. He was again wounded in action on 29 January 1916. The nature of the wounding is not recorded and it could only have been a minor wound as the records show he was taken by Camp Cavalry Field

Ambulance to No.1 Casualty Clearing Station in Chocques. Two days later Edward re-joined his regiment in the field.

Edward would not be so lucky with his next injury. On the 2 August 1916 Edward was kicked in the knee by a horse. He was evacuated from the field by the 3rd Cavalry Field Ambulance and transferred to a sick convoy on 13 August. On the 15 August, via the No. 21 Ambulance Train, he arrived at No.5 General Hospital in Rouen. Here it was officially reported that the "soldier was not to blame" for his injury.

The injury was sufficient for Edward to be returned to England and on the 21 August 1916 he arrived



No 5 General Hospital, Rouen



at Mile End Military Hospital, Bancroft Road, London. Here his injury was confirmed as a “displaced semi-lunar cartilage in left knee”. He was treated with massage and exercise that appeared to give him immediate relief. After 16 days, on 5 September he moved to the Orchard Convalescent Hospital in Dartford where he stayed for 26 days.

Edward remained in England on the strength of, firstly, the West Cavalry Depot and then the 4th Reserve Regiment. On 12 December 1916, he embarked from Southampton and re-joined his regiment in the field on 30 December 1916.

It does appear there was a slight blip to Edward’s usual good conduct when on 23 July 1917 a charge sheet registers that the Officer Commanding his regiment noted he was “Severely reprimanded by C.O. for (1) When on active service being out of bounds contrary to orders (2) Producing a false pass to the M.F.P.”.

By the end of 1917, Edward was experiencing bitterly cold weather and had arrived in billets that had been left in a terrible state. The war diary describes the conditions:

Date	Summary events and Information
3 rd Dec 1917	4th Dragoon Guards moved back to BRAY SUR SOMMES from LONGAY-ESNES. “Regiment paraded with led horses at 8.30 a.m. and marched via BOUCHAVESNES, where the Regiment took up the same billets, as last time, arriving at 3.0 p.m. Weather very cold. Dismounted Battalion remained in the line. 2/Lt de Pass proceeded to Dismounted Brigade H.Q. as galloper to the G.O.C.” The 4/D.G. faced some changes but largely went through routine days of cold and damp in billets.
4 th Dec	The 4/D.G. had to find 90 horses to go to Egypt together with 1 N.C.O. and 6 O.R. as “Conducting Party”.
7 th Dec	“We are again called on to find Candidates for Temporary Commission in the Infantry, one Candidate, No.14281 Private ALLAN being selected by the Commanding Officer to-day.”
17 th Dec	“Very cold, ground covered with snow. Men employed clearing roads, all German prisoners also used for this purpose.” Routine continued each day.
23 rd Dec	“The Regiment paraded in BRAY, at 8.15 a.m. and marched to the DOINGT Area [COURCELLES]. Road very slippery, and marching was very difficult especially for transport, the Regiment, however, completed the march without any casualties owing to falls. On arrival in the new area, the huts were found to have been completely stripped of all wood fitting, in fact everything that could be burnt had been removed. Weather extremely cold.”
25 th Dec	COURCELLES: “The Brigade stood to all day at 1 hours’ notice to move mounted. That is the standing order, at present whilst in this area. One Brigade in the Division stands to each day, making every third day for each Brigade. We are having Xmas dinner and celebrating tomorrow in consequence. Weather not so cold during the day but heavy fall of snow in the evening, and very hard frost again during the night.”



28 th Dec 1917	COURCELLES: "Leaders for the day to carry out improvements to huts and stables. There is a great lack of material and the conditions under which the men are living are very bad. When their huts are dry it is only because they are freezing, as soon as the Huts get warmed up inside the water pours through the roofs." A request went out the next day for Royal Engineers to be drawn on for help.
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The New Year opened in much the same vein. Routine activities with very cold weather:

Date	Summary events and Information
4 th Jan 1918	COURCELLES: The Commanding Officer held a Conference of Squadron Leaders in Orderly Room at Office hour, to discuss training. Each Cavalry Division will be out of the line for a clear month at a time, and will carry out individual training. A Regimental Canteen has been started and is being run by Lieut A.P. Williams. Its main object, at present is to provide warm drinks for the men during the day. Lieuts. Rawle, Cobbett, and Sanderson, Sergts Loads, Tayson and Bailey, proceeded today to DAOURS for the
15 th Jan	The Dismounted Battalion was called on to ready for a move into the forward area with a clear warning that "the majority of casualties at this time of the year were due to trench feet." Forward parties went out.
16 th Jan	Horses were being treated for mange. Thawing led to the ground worsening for the horses.
23 rd Jan	"A working party of 1 Officer and 50 Other Ranks and 6 G.S. wagons ordered by Brigade started work on standings for water troughs. The mud round the troughs is above the horses' fetlocks and the ground gets worse daily. 1 other rank sent up as reinforcement to Dismounted Regiment.
24 th Jan	Working party for water troughs as for yesterday with exception of 25 other ranks instead of 50. Routine as usual. Lieut. A.N. Odling re-joined from Equestrian School.
25 th Jan	The Veterinary Officer inspected the horses of "A" Squadron in the morning and found 9 more cases of suspected mange, 3 of which he evacuated to the Mobile Veterinary Section. The Dismounted Regiment returned to Camp at 9.30 p.m.

The 24 January 1918 marked the day Edward experienced his first symptoms of the heart condition that finally claimed his life in 1919. On reporting sick with shortness of breath he was evacuated via the 7th Cavalry Ambulance, the 6th General Hospital in Rouen, and the hospital ship "Western Australia", arriving back in England on 3 February 1918.

Edward was admitted to the Bermondsey Military Hospital in Ladywell, Lewisham and on 11 February a report was made where he was already being processed for discharge. The report read:

Disability in respect of which invaliding is proposed: V.D.H [Valvular Disease of the Heart] 293 (Double Aortic)



No previous history of Rheumatism or Scarlet Fever. No history of shortness of breath before enlistment. Present illness began on 25th January 1918, when patient reported sick for shortness of breath.

On admission to this hospital on 4th February 1918, the patient complained of Cardiac pain, shortness of breath and palpitation. The heart presented a marked double Aortic bruit [an unusual sound], the pulse was collapsing and capillary pulsation was visible.

Causation: Endocarditis; Attributable to Service during present War.

On 4 February 1918 he was put under the auspices of the Scottish Cavalry Depot. On the 18 February 1918 it was confirmed that due to his 100% disability, he would be discharged, under his original regiment (4th Dragoon Guards (Royal Irish)) effective from 7 March 1918. On this date Edward was awarded the Silver War Badge. [See Appendix 1].

It appeared that Edward's true age at the time of enlistment had remained undetected and he is recorded as being discharged age 30 years and 11 months and not his true age of 28 years 11 months.

Edward had served his country for 12 years and 108 days.

He came home to Lynsted where he lived with his brother Henry, in Church Cottages, Ludgate Lane. He was awarded a pension of £1 7s 6d (£1.37½p) for 26 weeks. In September 1918, he was reassessed. He had obviously benefitted, if only slightly, from his release from duties as it was stated there had been a 20% improvement in his condition. This improvement meant his pension was reduced to £1 2s 0d (£1.10p) a week (roughly £56 in today's money). This was to be reassessed in September 1919. We have no evidence the reassessment took place, but just 2 months after the proposed date, Edward died of his condition.

Edward was posthumously awarded the 1914 Star, British War and Victory medals. [See Appendix 1]

Edward is buried in Lynsted Churchyard Extension. His headstone holds the inscription "In memory of our dear brother. Gone but not forgotten". His age is given as 29 but he was actually 30.







Royal Air Force/Labour Corps

Died of illness 27 June 1920 Aged 19

Wilfred has proved a bit of an enigma and as such a detailed biography cannot be confirmed. Inaccuracies in record keeping and misspelling of his name has sent us down many a blind alley.

What we do know is that Wilfred was born in April 1901 at Ludgate Farm, Lynsted, the youngest of David and Mary Ann Gambell's three sons. Wilfred's oldest brother was Herbert, whose story we told in previous pages; his other brother Sidney survived the war.

By the time of Wilfred's christening in Lynsted Church on 28 April 1901, we meet the first misrecording. The christening records have recorded his name, and that of his parents, as "Gambrill". The 1911 Census has been transcribed incorrectly, giving Wilfred's middle initial as "G" rather than "J". The record itself is clear that the initial is "J". At this time Wilfred was living at Radfield Cottages, Bapchild. Towards the end of the war the Gambell family moved to Wanstall Cottages, Greenstreet, Lynsted.

Wilfred appears on the Lynsted Memorial as serving in the Royal Air Force (RAF), but confirmatory records have been impossible to find. The Royal Air Force was formed on 1 April 1918, when the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) were amalgamated. Officers and men of both services who continued service after this date, transferred into the newly formed RAF.

Wilfred does not appear on the RAF "Muster list" that lists all men serving in 1918. By rights Wilfred would not have been eligible for call up until his 18th birthday in April 1919. However, we should bear in mind that both his older brothers lied about their ages to serve. He too may have done this.

The last definitive record we have for Wilfred is his death certificate, where he is named as "Gamble". This lists him as a resident of Lynsted with the occupation of "Army Pensioner - General Labourer". This leaves us with two options:

1. Men who served in the RFC were classified as "army" personnel. So was he pensioned off prior to the formation of the RAF in April 1918? Or
2. Did he serve in the "Labour Corps" and "attached" to an RAF station?

Either way we meet a dead end. Enemy bombing in 1940 destroyed two-thirds of service records. In the case of men who served in the Labour Corps bombing destroyed all "nominal rolls". This means that there are no official records of which Company a man served in. In addition, none of the British based Companies kept War Diaries.

We can find no pension records or medal entitlements for Wilfred. For those who served in the RAF after 1 April 1918, the only place details can be found are on a service record. In addition if the man never entered a "theatre of war" he would not receive a medal.

Wilfred's death is not acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. To qualify, at the time of death, personnel needed to still be in military service and have died within the qualifying dates of 4 August 1914 to 31 August 1921. Location of their death and the cause of death were immaterial to their qualification. They could have been killed in action, died of wounds, died of illness or by accident, died due to suicide or homicide or suffered judicial execution. CWGC treats all casualties equally and all must be commemorated under the terms of their Royal Charter. However,



in the cases of personnel who had been discharged from, or retired from, the military before their deaths during the same qualifying periods, it would need proven evidence that their injury or illness was caused by or exacerbated by their service. Wilfred's cause of death was recorded as "Nephritis (sub acute)" and probably considered as not being induced by war service.

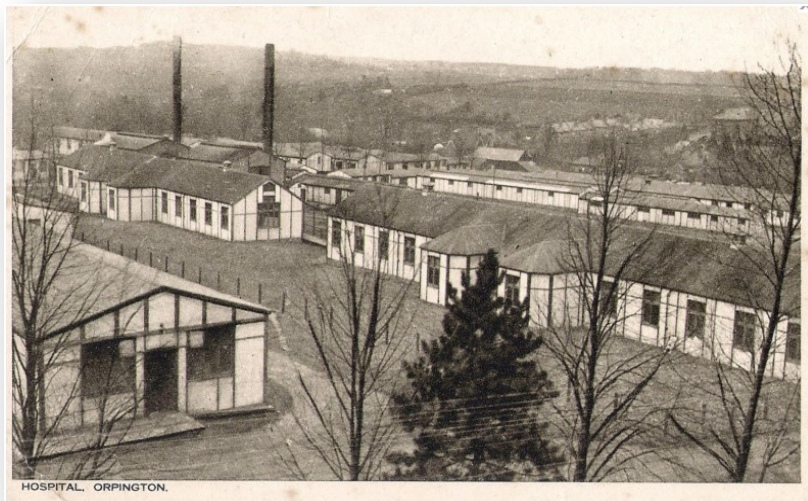
Wilfred's place of death was the Ministry of Pensions Hospital in Orpington. The hospital was originally the Ontario Military Hospital; inaugurated by the Government of Ontario in February 1916 for the care of Canadian troops in camps in England or actively engaged at the front in France. The 70-acre site was chosen as it lay 15 miles from London and near the main South-Eastern railway line from Dover to Folkestone. Although the majority of the patients were Canadian, troops from Britain and the British Empire - Newfoundland (then a British colony), Australia, New Zealand - as well as from the Allied forces were also received. In September 1917, the Hospital was reorganised and renamed the No. 16 Canadian General Hospital.

By January 1919 more than 25,000 wounded troops had been treated at the Hospital. Only 182 (less than 1%) died; most are buried in the 'Canadian Corner' of the nearby All Saints' Church graveyard. The Hospital was finally demobilised on 20 September 1919, when it came under the control of the Ministry of Pensions.

Ministry of Pensions hospitals were not military hospitals, though some of them had been during the war. When the war ended, the number of sick and disabled ex-servicemen was too great a burden for the civilian hospitals. Some hospitals were opened under the direction of the Ministry of Pensions (rather than the War Office) for ex-servicemen who needed ongoing care on either a permanent/intermittent/temporary basis. Now staffed by the Ministry of Pensions Nursing Service, it then provided treatment and care for 1,000 disabled ex-servicemen and "medical" patients.

Patients included those suffering from heart disease, tuberculosis, bronchitis, asthma etc.

Investigations are ongoing to find Wilfred's final resting place.



Ministry of Pensions Hospital, Orpington







Gunner, 317274

1st/1st Home Counties (Kent) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery (Territorial Force),

Died of peritonitis 7 August 1920 Aged 24

William is the last Lynsted casualty of the First World War, dying as a result of wounds received in war service before the official cut-off date of 31 August 1921. We know that it was not uncommon for lives to be cut short from the effects of gassing etc. No doubt others will have succumbed after the cut-off date for official remembrance.

Born in Bordon in the second quarter of 1896, William was the oldest child of George Henry, a farm carter originally from Bapchild, and Alice Amelia (née Steers) originally from Canterbury. At the time of the 1901 Census, William was living at Key Street, Borden, along with two younger siblings, George and Leonard. By the time of the 1911 Census, the family had moved to Ivy Cottage, Norton and there was an addition to the family, a sister, Alice. William was working as a farm labourer.

Few of William's records are available. Although we do not know when William joined up, legally he would not have been old enough to have embarked for active service until 28 December 1915.

We know he served in the 1st/1st Home Counties (Kent) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery (Territorial Force). The Heavy Batteries were in charge of the heavy 60 pounder (5 inch) guns, firing high explosive shells. They were most often employed in destroying enemy artillery and strategic targets behind enemy lines.

Upon mobilisation in Aug 1914, William's battery was part of the 44th (Home Counties) Division. Based at first in the UK, it took up position at the defensive forts on the south coast.

The battery joined 2nd Home Counties Division on 30 October 1915 and moved to billets near Windsor. On 17 November 1915 the battery began to equip for posting abroad. They embarked for Le Havre on 28 December 1915, arriving the following day. Two days later the Battery joined the 16th Heavy Brigade, RGA.

On 25 April 1916, they transferred to the 48th Heavy Artillery Group (HAG) and began their

preparations for the beginning of the Battle of the Somme. On the days preceding the battle, the battery was engaged in bombardment of the surrounding German-held villages. Sadly their accuracy was poor. Of 30 shells fired, just 3 were on target. With the postponement of the battle due to poor weather, the Battery continued firing but at a significantly lower rate than was possible and wide of the target.

At 6.25am on 1 July 1916, the Battery took part in a 65 minute bombardment of the German front. At 07.30am the infantry battalions went over the top while the heavy guns moved to fire onto the



IWM - Q 3020

A 60 pounder Mark I being taken out of its emplacement to move it forward. Royal Garrison Artillery (R.G.A.) at Wieltje, 5th September 1917



German support and reserve lines in an effort to suppress the German artillery. Although this action engaged a large number of German batteries, it was reported that they had little affect. By the end of this first day of the Somme, although slight gains had been made, these had to be abandoned after dark.

Over the next two years, the 1/1st Kent Battery remained with the 92nd Brigade, now renamed the 92nd (Mobile) Brigade.

We know that William was serving “somewhere in France” at the beginning of 1918 as he was one of the men from Lynsted and Teynham who sent a note of thanks for the Christmas gifts received from villagers at home. His thanks were published in the Faversham and North East Kent News on 19 January 1918:

W. Packham:- “Thank you for the magnificent smokes; they are the best I have smoked...Let us all hope that this year is the year of victory.”

At the start of the German Spring Offensive on 21 March 1918, William’s Brigade went to the support of the Third Army, with which they would remain until the end of the war. After the collapse of the offensive on 18 July 1918, the Allied forces went on the attack with the Hundred Day Offensive (8 August - 11 November 1918). William’s Brigade was assigned to support the attacks during the Battle of Cambrai-St Quentin (27 September– 19 October).

As the war dragged to its end, the 92nd Brigade were again attached to IV Corps Artillery for the Battle of the River Selle (17 - 25 October 1918). Finally they were called in to support the 37th Division and the New Zealand Division in capturing the old fortress of Le Quesnoy during the Battle of the Sambre on 4 November 1918.

In January 1920, William was awarded the British War and Victory medals. *[See appendix 1]*

We have found no records that pinpoint when or where William received the injuries that would eventually lead to his death from peritonitis on 7 August 1920. At this time William was living at home with his parents at 92 London Road, Lynsted.

William is buried in the Lynsted Churchyard extension, where his headstone reads “Till we meet again”.









Have you forgotten yet?...

For the world's events have rumbled on since those gagged days,
Like traffic checked while at the crossing of city-ways:
And the haunted gap in your mind has filled with thoughts that flow
Like clouds in the lit heaven of life; and you're a man reprieved to go,
Taking your peaceful share of Time, with joy to spare.
But the past is just the same--and War's a bloody game...

Have you forgotten yet?...

Look down, and swear by the slain of the War that you'll never forget.

Do you remember the dark months you held the sector at Mametz--
The nights you watched and wired and dug and piled sandbags on parapets?
Do you remember the rats; and the stench
Of corpses rotting in front of the front-line trench--
And dawn coming, dirty-white, and chill with a hopeless rain?
Do you ever stop and ask, 'Is it all going to happen again?'

Do you remember that hour of din before the attack--
And the anger, the blind compassion that seized and shook you then
As you peered at the doomed and haggard faces of your men?
Do you remember the stretcher-cases lurching back
With dying eyes and lolling heads--those ashen-grey
Masks of the lads who once were keen and kind and gay?

Have you forgotten yet?...

Look up, and swear by the green of the spring that you'll never forget.

Siegfried Sassoon





After four years, three months and one week, the Great War, “the war to end all wars”, came to an end at 11.00am on 11 November 1918. For many at home or who returned, life would never be the same again.

Writing in 1935, in her book “Teynham Hundred (798-1935)”, Elizabeth Selby reflected on the impact on our local communities:

“.....from our position on the main route to London from the coast of France, we took more than the share of the rest of England in the war anxieties.

There have always been men of Teynham and Lynsted in the Navy, and all men who could be spared from agriculture were soon in the forces, and all parishes lost their sons, as the Rolls of Honour show. The women took their part as nurses, providers of necessities for hospitals, field workers and vegetable preservers.

The Commandants of both war hospitals in Sittingbourne lived in Teynham, and many Lynsted and Doddington women went to and fro to the hospitals, nursing, cooking, cleaning, etc., during the four years of the war, for both hospitals were mobilised in October 1914 and not closed till the spring of 1919.

Most of us who lived in the London Road remember the enormous traffic of the first few weeks, starting on August 4th quite early with cars laden with reservist sailors cheering on their way to join their ships at Chatham, and the poor little Boy Scouts who were set to guard each telegraph pole!

Many of us remember a rumble at night, and forty London buses on their way to the front in 1914.

The so-called “Russians” were seen passing Teynham Station – in this case Marines on their way to Deal.

Again, in 1915 a rumble awoke us and was found to be the first Zeppelin raid which gave us our first shock of bombs dropping, this time over Sittingbourne.

A worse occasion was the Fokkers dropping bombs over Chatham in 1917. The sound of air raids became too painfully common. For a whole week in 1917 the familiar “Take cover – air raid” was heard every night, but no bomb was dropped on any of our parishes.

We saw German aeroplanes come down at Sheerness and Harty, and the last big raid in June 1918 was an inferno of noise and air fighting over us for hours. An anti-aircraft gun, with officer and gunners, was placed at Conyer on the Downs, and a powerful searchlight against the road on the way there. There was in 1918 a travelling gun, so while bombs were not dropped there was plenty of danger from falling shrapnel.

The great explosion in the mine-filling factory at Oare took place in April 1916, and this shook the villages and caused the deaths of two Teynham men.

Alarms of invasions occurred on one or two occasions, and instructions were issued to all inhabitants in case of invasion to make their way by by-roads to Lenham and Harrietsham, as it was not proposed to defend this portion of Kent. We had no trenches, and no troops quartered here.

Our windows rattled for days before the July 1st attack on the Somme in 1916, and the rumble



Conclusion

of guns could be heard any still summer evening for four years."

On the Armistice Elizabeth Selby wrote:

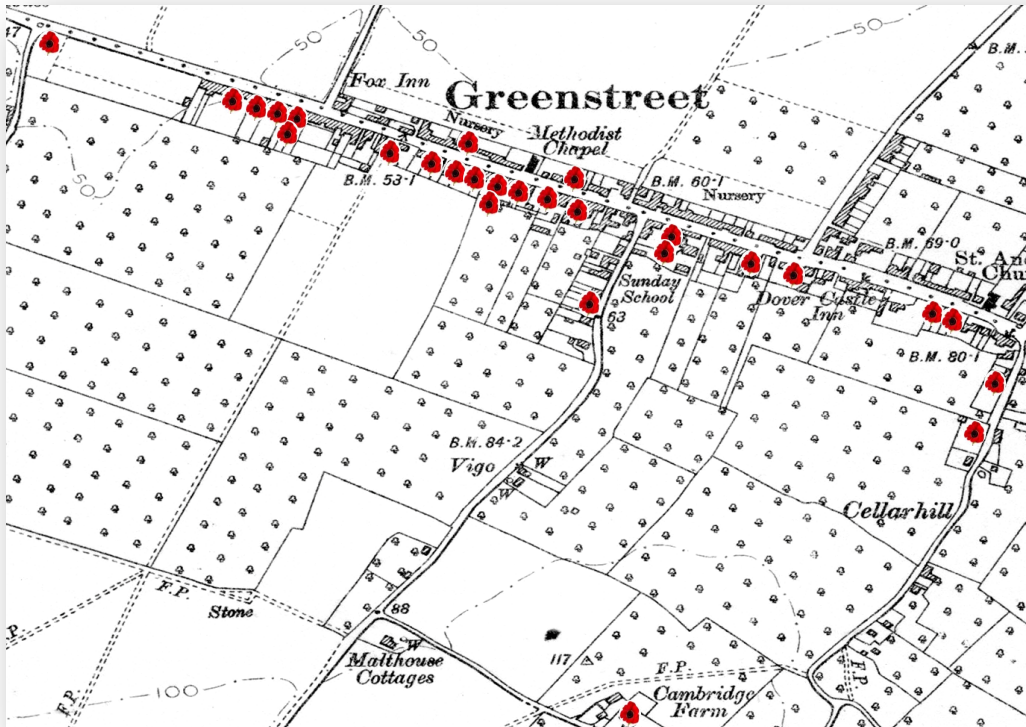
"The Armistice came to a tired neighbourhood in the throes of a terribly bad influenza epidemic, but I well remember starting for Glovers Hospital just after the maroons had gone at 11 o'clock on November 11th and seeing aeroplanes from Eastchurch flying to and fro with long streamers floating behind, and all the people of Greenstreet running out of their homes, waving their hands and shouting, "Is it really true?""

With the War over, there was an enduring legacy now facing many families. No part of our parish escaped the events of the four years of War. The homes of our casualties were spread across Lynsted village, and the hamlets of Tickham, Erriottwood and Homestall.

The burden placed on these small communities is shown by each poppy placed on the maps below:



Not surprisingly the highest concentration of the parish's populace is found in the commercial hub of Greenstreet along the modern-day London Road (A2). Three families along Greenstreet lost two sons.



(In addition the two orphaned children of William Drayson were living at 4 Triggs Cottages, Teynham.)

If we take into account the Teynham residents of Greenstreet, the picture is even more bleak:





Conclusion

The effect on families of those commemorated in this book is of course not the whole story. Many had close family ties with others in our parish and adjoining parishes. For example, we have read of one mother who had lost her own son and had 15 nephews serving at the front.

For those left behind, post-war life would not be easy. Some family homes were tied to their late husband's employment. Some women had no option but to return to their parents or find alternative accommodation. Some remarried but others would live out their lives as widows.

Henry Carrier's biography gives details of the dire straits in which his grieving wife found herself, eventually losing all her young children. We have spoken with another family who could not understand why their great grandparents had not stepped in to help the widow and her children, who later felt abandoned; our research found the grand-parents were living in the workhouse.

Another family story shared with us was of a mother who went to work in the fields to support herself and her three children; her job being to lift, top and tail turnips. Wanting to help his mother, her young son would pull up the first row of turnips on his way to school - his reward was to be caned by the Headmaster for arriving at school with muddy boots.

Some family businesses in the parish had lost the son who may have eventually taken over. Some wives married again, but many did not. Those families left with only a female line, saw the family line end. With the loss of so many men from a generation, many young girls never married. We have no way of telling how many young girls lost their young love or their fiancé.

While the Armistice occurred in November 1918, many of our troops found their overseas work was not over. Some would not return for many months and not be officially de-mobilised until sometime later. By the time that they returned home, the celebrations had concluded and people were getting on with their lives.

We hear stories about the stoicism of British people who just "carried on", of men who returned home but who would not talk about the atrocities they had witnessed. In hindsight, this is easy to understand. For those grieving, the mothers, children, wives, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts and grandparents to who could they turn? How do you turn to a neighbour or family member for comfort when they are likely mourning their own losses and dealing with their own problems? I do not find it surprising that the men who did return might not want to speak about what they had seen and experienced. Again, in hindsight, who are we to judge? In truth, even with the span of time since the First World War and the many books and films published, I am left unable to comprehend the full horror that each of our men faced. Would anyone living in our Parishes at that time have understood what they might be told of the horror of fighting at the Front or on the High Seas? Would a man want to speak about the loss of their friends and comrades? Did the families of those who were coping with the grief of their losses, who were told their loved one "died an honourable, quick and painless death", want to hear what may actually have happened? Perhaps both families and returning soldiers felt it was best to hold onto their own stories.

I leave you to draw your own conclusions. I do not pretend to understand the wider canvas of the politics and social impact of the war and its after-effects. Instead, my intention has been to paint a more personal story at the human scale. I began this project feeling anger towards the senior officers who seemed to have no idea how to fight a modern war. Again, who am I to judge? Warfare was changing, lessons had to be learned and fast. There was triumph and tragedy on all sides. It is done. It is almost unbelievable that it would happen again just 21 years later.



Of 37 Lynsted with Kingsdown's casualties, 23 have no known grave. They remain in the land or sea where they fell. I hope this project stands as a fitting remembrance of the men that *shall grow not old*.



First World War Medals awarded to the men listed in this book

The 1914 star (aka the Mons Star)



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The medal is made of bronze with a red, white and blue ribbon, reflecting the French Tricolour.

To be eligible you had to be a member of the British Forces who had served in France or Belgium between 5 August 1914 (the declaration of war) and midnight 22 November 1914 (the end of the First Battle of Ypres). Predominantly those eligible would have been the 'Old Contemptibles', the professional pre-war soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force. The medal would be adorned with a horizontal metal bar worn on the ribbon and inscribed '5th Aug.-22nd Nov. 1914'. To be eligible you would have served under enemy fire. The service number, rank, name and unit were impressed on the back.



© IWM (OMD 791)

The 1914-15 star

Similar to the 1914 Star but with the dates 1914-15 in the centre of the star, it was issued to a wider range of recipients. They included those who served in any theatre of war outside the UK between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915, except those eligible for the 1914 Star. The recipient's service number, rank, name and unit were impressed on the reverse.

These two "star" medals were never awarded alone. The recipient would also receive the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. These three medals together were nicknamed "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred". They were characters in a Daily Mirror comic strip that featured Pip the dog, Squeak the penguin and Wilfred the rabbit.



© IWM (OMD 794)

British War Medal 1914-18

This solid silver medal was awarded to officers and men of the British and Imperial Forces who either entered a theatre of war (an area of active fighting) or served overseas (perhaps as a garrison soldier) between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918 inclusive. Later this was extended to service in Russia, Siberia and some other areas in 1919 and 1920.

The front depicts King George V and the reverse shows the dates of the First World War and St. George on horseback trampling underfoot the eagle shield of the central powers (German and Austro-Hungarian Empires), with a skull and cross-bones. The ribbon has a central band of orange edged with white, black and blue lines. The recipient's service number, rank, name and unit were inscribed on the rim of the medal. This is the only medal that could be awarded on its own. Sadly a lot of these medals were sold for scrap value.



© IWM (OMD 1042)

The Victory Medal

Made of bronze, a serviceman would have to have entered a theatre of war (an area of active fighting), not just served overseas, to qualify for this medal. The face of the medal has a depiction of the winged figure of Victory and on the reverse it says 'The Great War for Civilisation 1914-1919'. Their service number, rank, name and unit were impressed on the rim. The colours of the ribbon represent the combined colours of the Allied nations, with the rainbow additionally representing the calm after the storm. The ribbon consists of a double rainbow with red at the centre.

This medal would always be awarded along with the British War Medal. The British War Medal and the Victory medal worn together were nicknamed "Mutt and Jeff" after two American comic strip characters.



Military Medal (M.M.)

The Military Medal was awarded to other ranks of the British Army and Commonwealth Forces. It was an award for gallantry and devotion to duty when under fire in battle on land.



The reverse of the medal is inscribed "For Bravery in the Field". The recipient's details are inscribed around the edge. The ribbon is dark blue, with five equal centre stripes in order white, red, white, red, and white. The recipient is entitled to use the letters M.M. after their name.



Military Cross (M.C.)

Instituted by Royal Warrant on 28th December 1914.

Made of silver, the Military Cross was a decoration for gallantry during active operations in the presence of the enemy. Issued to British Army, Indian Army or Colonial Forces commissioned officers with the rank of Captain or below or Warrant Officers. From June 1917, officers of the rank of Captain but who had a temporary rank of Major could receive the award.

The reverse of the medal was issued plain with no engraving. Some families and individuals engraved their details at their own expense. The ribbon width is 32 mm and consists of three equal vertical moiré stripes of white, purple, and white. Recipients of the medal are entitled to use the letters M.C. after their name.



The Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM)

Awarded for extremely high levels of bravery, the DCM was instituted during the Crimean War in 1854, it was awarded to other ranks who had shown the equivalent level of bravery that led to commissioned officers qualifying for the Distinguished Service Order. However, the DCM ranked well below the DSO in precedence.

Any further acts of bravery would be recognised with the addition of bars, but this was changed to laurel wreaths in 1916. Recipients are entitled to the post-nominal letters DCM.

A silver medal 36 mm in diameter. The obverse of this medal is an effigy of the reigning monarch. The reverse on all issues bears the inscription "FOR DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT IN THE FIELD". The suspender is of an ornate scroll type. The ribbon is 32 mm wide, with three equal parts crimson, dark blue, and crimson.



The Silver War Badge

This sterling silver lapel badge intended to be worn on the right breast on civilian clothes only, was issued to UK WW1 service personnel who had been honourably discharged due to wounds or sickness. It was also referred to as a Discharge Badge, Wound Badge or Services Rendered Badge. It was first issued in September 1916, accompanied by an official certificate of entitlement.

This was put in place to avoid the ex-serviceman being subjected to the practice of some women to present white feathers to apparently able-bodied young men who were not wearing the King's uniform.

Each badge held a unique number on the reverse.





Appendix 2

War Gratuity

In December 1918, a War Gratuity was introduced as a payment for men who served in the First World War for at least 6 months of home service, or for any length of service if a man had served abroad.

Before its introduction, men had been paid a service gratuity under the Royal Pay Warrant. Some men would already have been paid the service gratuity. On payment the War Gratuity was adjusted so they did not receive the full value of both.

During the production of this book, reference was made to the "Register of soldier's effects" held by the National Army Museum. The information contained in these records has enabled us to calculate length of service of the casualty in the absence of other military records. In some cases, these records narrow down the place of their death and their next of kin. This type of information was not available for those who served in the Royal Navy or Royal Flying Corps/Royal Air Force.

The rules governing the gratuity were implemented under Army Order 17 of 1919, the full text for which is as follows:

Army Order 17 of 1919 – Army Council Instructions

Army Council's instructions

The expression "normal period of service" in the Warrant refers to the terms under which soldiers are accepted for service in the Regular Army in Sections A, B or D of the Army Reserve, Class I., under regulations other than those specifically relating to the war. The terms are laid down in the Regulations for the Recruiting for the Regular Army, the Regulations for the Army Reserves, Class I. and the King's Regulations.

The soldiers entitled to war gratuity in addition to service gratuity are:-

- (i) Soldiers whose whole war service has been on a Regular normal engagement (including Section D reservists) as defined in 1 above.*
- (ii) Soldiers serving on a Regular normal engagement as defined in 1 above, who have been retained or have voluntarily continued beyond the term of their engagements during their war service.*

For the following soldiers, the war gratuity will include any gratuity payable under the regulations mentioned at 29 below:-

- (i) Soldiers serving on Special Reserve, Territorial Force or duration of the war attestations, or deemed to have been enlisted for the duration of the war.*
- (ii) Soldiers of the Regular Army re-enlisted or deemed to have been re-enlisted for the duration of the war.*

Soldiers, part of whose service falls under 2 and part under 3, are entitled to draw the gratuities in 29 below in addition to war gratuity for the first mentioned portion of their service, but for the last mentioned portion.

In the case of a soldier who re-enlists under Army Order IV of 10th December, 1918, and is not



Appendix 2

counting service for both gratuities under 2 above, the gratuity mentioned in 29 below will be included in the war gratuity up to the date of his re-enlistment under that Army Order, but from that date he will begin to earn the gratuity payable on discharge &c. under the regulations mentioned in 29 below, in addition to any war gratuity for which he may be eligible.

The appropriate regulations referred to in paragraph 2 of the Schedule are the regulations of the Admiralty and Air Ministry authorising war gratuity for the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force retrospectively – see also under 87 below.

For soldiers who are entitled to count service for war gratuity as well as for the gratuity under the regulations mentioned at 29 below i.e. those coming under 2 and all those re-enlisted under Army Order IV. of 10th December, 1918, the period for war service will terminate at the end of the war as defined hereafter by statutory authority. For those coming under 3, whose war gratuity includes gratuity under the regulation mentioned at 29, the period for war service will terminate on 3rd August, 1919.

Soldiers referred to in 8, who serve beyond 3rd August, 1919, will be entitled to draw the gratuity under the regulations mentioned in 29 below as from the next anniversary of their enlistment, re-enlistment or recall, subsequent to that date.

The gratuity issuable under the Warrant to soldiers of the South African Overseas Contingent, referred to in 12(a) will include the gratuity admissible under the regulations mentioned at 29 below, but not the extra gratuity payable from Union of South Africa funds under ACI 1809 of 1918.

A soldier who has rendered war service in more than one engagement will not be entitled to a minimum gratuity in respect of separate engagement. The gratuity will be assessed in such cases on the soldier's total war service. Former service which the soldier denied when joining under a subsequent engagement will be allowed to reckon.

The exceptions from gratuity referred to in paragraph 4 of the Schedule are as follow:-Any coloured personnel enlisted in to the units therein mentioned at rates of pay which vary from those drawn by the European personnel serving therein e.g. coloured personnel from West Africa enlisted in the Island Water Transport Section of the R.E. (Transportation Branch) and coloured personnel from the West Indies enlisted in the RGA at rates of pay which do not include the increases granted by Army Order 1 of 1918.

The following will, if otherwise qualified, be eligible for the gratuity:-(a) Soldiers of the South African Overseas Contingent (see 9 above) and soldiers of the South African and Rhodesian Contingents in East and Central Africa who, whilst serving therewith, were in receipt of either the full British rates of pay applicable to European soldiers or Union of South Africa rates of pay.

(b) Soldiers of Bermuda Volunteer Rifle Corps serving with the special contingent attached to the Lincolnshire Regiment.

(c) European soldiers transferred, or appointed, from units the depots of which are situated in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man to service with the following units, raised outside the United Kingdom:-

The Malta Division, Royal Engineers (Militia)

The King's Own Malta Regiment of Militia

The Royal Malta Artillery

The Hong Kong Singapore Royal Garrison Artillery

The Sierra Leone Company, Royal Garrison Artillery The Bermuda Militia Artillery

The Bermuda Volunteer Rifle Corps

The West India Regiment

The West African Regiment

The King's African Rifles

The West African Frontier Force

The British West Indies Regiment

The Cape Colony (Infantry)

The Cape Auxiliary Horse Transport Companies

The Cape Coloured Labour Battalion

The South African Native Labour Corps

The Chinese Labour Corps

Maltese enlisted at the full British rates of pay in the Army Service Corps and coloured personnel enlisted in to units referred to in paragraph 4 of the Schedule at the full rates of pay (including the increases authorised in Army Order 1 of 1918) drawn by the European personnel of those units are entitled, otherwise qualified, to the gratuity under this Warrant.

The rank which will determine the minimum gratuity will be the substantive, temporary or acting rank held by the soldier on the termination of his war service, or in the case of those serving beyond the 11th November, 1918, on that date, if higher.

A non-commissioned officer who at the time of his discharge, demobilisation, transfer to the reserve, or death, was holding a rank or appointment (temporary, substantive, or acting) which, subsequently, under the Warrants published in Army Orders 70 of 1915 and 194 of 1918, entitled its holder to the temporary, substantive or acting rank of warrant officer Class II, will be eligible for the gratuity under this Warrant as though he were a warrant officer Class II at the time of his discharge, demobilisation, transfer or death, as the case may be.

A soldier who has at any time during his war service embarked for the service overseas outside the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, will be considered for the purpose of the war gratuity as having served overseas, subject to 25 below.

A soldier who was enlisted and discharged overseas without having embarked for service away from the place of his enlistment will not be regarded as having served overseas unless he served with troops under a General Officer Commanding-in-Chief in the Field.

A soldier who has served on the staff of a hospital ship or transport proceeding to or from a port outside the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man will be considered for the purpose of this Warrant to have served overseas, notwithstanding that he has remained on the strength of a unit at home.

The assessment of the qualifying service from the war gratuity in a case where part of the soldier's total service during the war period does not reckon as qualifying service, will be made as in the case of war pay e.g. if a soldier who enlisted on the 1st January, 1917, was awarded 42 days' detention on the 1st May 1917, the minimum grant under paragraph 5 of the Schedule will cover the period of 1st January, 1917, to 11th February, 1918.

The mode of assessing the additional gratuity in respect of the period beyond the 12 calendar months' war service mentioned in paragraph 6 of the Schedule, for the soldier referred to in



Appendix 2

paragraph 7 of the Schedule will be as follows:-5s (or 2s6d) for each complete calendar month or portion of a calendar month in the whole of the additional period, plus 5s, (or 2s6d) similarly reckoned on such portion of that additional period as may have elapsed before the date from which pension was issuable or would have been issuable had an election to draw pension under Army Order 1 of 1918 been made.

The special gratuity referred to in paragraph 10 of the Schedule is that provided in paragraph 12 of Army Order 283 of 1914.

As regards paragraph 11 (a) of the Schedule the gratuity will not be issuable to any soldier who on or before the date on which the gratuity is issuable is discharged under paragraphs 392 (x), (xi) or (xii) King's Regulations, or who on that date is undergoing a sentence of penal servitude, imprisonment or detention at the expiration of which he is discharged under either of those paragraphs.

Paymasters will be furnished by the War Office with nominal wills of the soldiers who are excluded under paragraph 11 (c) of the schedule from eligibility for the war gratuity. No soldier will be excluded under this paragraph except on the authority of these lists.

Paragraph 11 (f) of the Schedule refers to the classes mentioned in ACI's 806 and 1040 of 1917, as ineligible for gratuities under the regulations referred to at 29 below.

As regards paragraph 12 (a) of the Schedule, where the whole of the soldier's war service is performed at home or in the place of enlistment abroad (see 17 above) he will be eligible only for the gratuity on the scale laid down in paragraphs 6 to 9 of the Schedule, for a soldier with no overseas service, notwithstanding that he may during a portion of the period of his service which does not reckon as war service have served overseas or embarked for service overseas. Thus a soldier who after the date of his conviction or of the order dispensing with his trial for desertion has not subsequently served or embarked for service overseas will be assessed as though he had not served overseas, notwithstanding any previous overseas service. Similarly, any soldiers referred to in 27 (iii) below, who have war service at home only, will not be entitled to the overseas scale shown in paragraphs 6 to 9 of the Schedule. Other similar cases will be dealt with in like manner.

Paragraph 12 (a) of the Schedule will not apply to cases in which, where trial for desertion had been dispensed with, the soldier had not at that time, or subsequently been ordered to forfeit pay for the period of absence. In such cases previous war service will reckon.

Paragraph 12 (c) of the Schedule refers to service spent in the following categories :-(i) Soldiers enlisted for Forage Department, Royal Army Service Corps.

(ii) Civilian staffs of war hospitals enlisted at civil rates of pay for home and local service.

(iii) Soldiers serving with the Expeditionary Force Canteens and drawing civil rates of pay. (Any period during which the soldier was attached to the Expeditionary Force Canteens and drawing Army rates of pay will reckon as war service).

(iv) Soldiers released for civil employment as munitions workers.

(v) In the case of a soldier in agricultural employment, the whole of any continuous period of more than 8 months during which he may have been so employed and in receipt of civil pay under the conditions of ACI 1155 of 1917.

(vi) In the case of a soldier released from military duty under Army Order 229 of 1918 the whole of any continuous period of more than 8 months during which he was not entitled to Army pay and



allowance. Soldiers of the Transport Workers Battalions and of the Dock Battalions, King's Liverpool Regiment will be eligible for the gratuity.

No period of service in any part of the Army Reserve will reckon as war service.

The gratuity referred to in Paragraph 18 of the Schedule is that laid down in Articles 1117 to 1119 of the Pay Warrant and Army Orders 427 and 502 of 1914, 24 and 168 of 1915 and 181 of 1916. Any gratuity for which the soldier may be eligible under the regulations mentioned above may, if more advantageous, be issued in lieu of the gratuity admissible under this Warrant.

The gratuity or balance of gratuity admissible under this Warrant in the case of a soldier not already discharged or deceased will be issuable at the end of the period of war service on which his gratuity is assessed or on the date on which the soldier's colour service terminates on demobilization, if later.

For soldiers discharged, other than as insane, on or after the 9th December, 1918, the Paymaster will take the necessary action for issue of any sum payable under this Warrant.

In the case of a soldier deceased or discharged as insane, for whom Army Form O1815 (Or equivalent report) has not yet been rendered to the War Office, the Paymaster will credit the soldier with any gratuity or balance of gratuity before reporting the balance. Particulars will be given on Army Form O1815 showing how the gratuity or balance of gratuity is arrived at.

In the case of deceased or insane soldiers in respect of whom Army Form O1815 (or equivalent report) has already been rendered, and of men who have died or become insane since discharge, Army Form W5070 will have been forwarded by the War Office to the Paymaster for insertion of the gratuity or balance of gratuity due. A recapitulation of the credits notified each day on Army Form W5070 will be forwarded to the Secretary of the War Office, Imperial Institute, London, SW7 with the relative forms. The charge against Army Votes in these cases will be made by the War Office direct.

Soldiers discharged before the 9th December are being instructed by public notices to render claims on the Army Form W5063 (to be obtained at any post office) for the gratuity or balance of gratuity due. Where the soldier, if not discharged as insane, renders the claim himself, the Paymaster will verify the particulars of service and assess the amount for issue. If a claim is received from a soldier who was discharged insane it will be transmitted to the Secretary, War Office, Imperial Institute, SW7.

Where the discharged soldier is unable to make a claim himself, his next-of-kin or legatee will render Army Form W5063 to the War Office and the Paymaster will be instructed as may be necessary.

Subject to any special instructions that may be issued, and to the exceptions specified below, the amount available for payment will be deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank. Deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank will not be made in the case of :- (a) Soldiers deceased or discharged insane, or who have died or become insane since discharge.

(b) Discharged soldiers who are resident overseas when the gratuity or balance of gratuity is ready for issued.

(c) Soldiers whose claims to repatriation abroad on demobilisation have been established, and who have elected to embark at the first opportunity, remaining in the service until passages are available.

The Paymaster will obtain from the Office i/c Records any particulars of service required for the assessment of the gratuity or balance of gratuity due. Where a soldier claims former service, qualifying for war gratuity, in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines or Royal Air Force, the Paymaster will obtain a statement of the qualifying service allowed to reckon from the officers specified below :-



Appendix 2

Naval ratings (including Royal Navy Volunteer Accountant-General Admiralty (AG 9) Reserve, other than those of the Royal Naval Division and Royal Fleet Reserve)

Royal Marines

The commandant of the Division concerned

Royal Naval Division

Officer i/c Royal Naval Division Records, 47, Victoria Street, London, SW1

Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Naval

Registrar- General of Shipping and Seamen, Reserve T Tower Hill, EC8.

Royal Air Force

Officer i/c Records, Royal Air Force.

Except in the case of the Royal Air Force, the respective officers specified in 37 will state the amount of any gratuity already paid which has to be reckoned in the assessment of the balance. In the case of the Royal Air Force, particulars of any gratuity already issued will be obtained from the Central Pay Office, Royal Air Force, Woking.

Special instructions will be issued in regard to the assessment and mode of issue of the gratuity or balance of gratuity due to soldiers of the South African and Rhodesian contingents.

All issues of the gratuity or balance of gratuity or notifications to the War Office on Army Form O1815 or Army Form W5070 will be recorded in the soldier's ledger sheet or in the pay sheet in which the last charge for his pay is made as the case may be. Note: Army Forms W5063 and W5070 referred to above are in preparation and will be available as soon as supplied are received from the printers.



Sources

Lynsted with Kingsdown Society archive material
 Imperial War Museums First World War Centenary Partnership resources
 Commonwealth War Graves Commission
ancestry.com
findmypast.co.uk
forceswarrecords.co.uk
familysearch.org
 Kent Roll of Honour
 Australian National memorial
 Canadian National Memorial
 Kingsdown, Lynsted and Norton Parish Newsletter
 Sittingbourne and Faversham Libraries newspaper archive
 Diary of Henry Tabor, Royal Flying Corps
 Private Journal of Siegfried Sassoon

Historical Records of The Buffs East Kent Regiment (3rd Foot) formerly designated The Holland Regiment and Prince George of Denmark's Regiment 1914-1919 by Colonel R S H Moody, CB, , late of The Buffs.

Teynham Manor and Hundred (798-1935) by Elizabeth Selby MBE

History of the 12th (Eastern) Division in the Great War 1914-1918 by P Middleton Brumwell, MC, CF

The 18th Division in the Great War by Captain G H F Nicholls

A Short History of the 6th Division by Major-General T O Marden CB, CMG

History of the Royal Fusiliers by H C O'Neil

The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, 1914-1919 by Captain C T Atkinson

Regimental and Divisional War Diaries:

1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
 6th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
 8th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
 10th (Royal West Kent & West Kent Yeomanry) Battalion
 1/1st Kent Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery
 1/1st Royal East Kent Yeomanry (The Duke of Connaught's Own (Mounted Rifles))
 Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) (Kent Division)
 8th (Service) Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)
 2nd Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment
 11th (Service) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)
 32nd (Service) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)
 1/16th (City of London) Battalion, London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles)
 2nd (City of London) Battalion, London Regiment, (17th Royal Fusiliers)
 Household Battalion, Household Cavalry and Cavalry of the Line



Appendix 3

Household Cavalry and Cavalry of the Line, 5th Dragoon Guards (Princess Charlotte of Wales Own)

2/14th (County of London) Battalion, London Regiment (London Scottish)

4th (Cumberland and Westmorland) Battalion (Territorial)

7th Canadian Infantry, (1st British Columbia Regiment) 63rd Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) A Company, 6th Battalion

7th Infantry Brigade, 28th Battalion, 13th Reinforcements, Australian Infantry, Australian Imperial Force

10th (Service) Battalion, South Wales Borderers, (1st Gwent)

4th (Royal Irish) Dragoon Guards

223 Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

Frederick GODFREY

Page 47

Final paragraph, Alan Godfrey is Frederick's grandson, not nephew.

Sydney Arthur WATTS

Since the publication of this book on 10 November 2018, I have been contacted by Mr Peter Nokes, a great-great-nephew of Sydney Watts. Mr Nokes was able to correct the details for the first wife of Sydney's father and named an additional half-sibling. I am grateful to Mr Nokes for enabling me to make these corrections.

First three paragraphs of page 197 of Sydney's biography have been updated to read:

Sydney (sometimes incorrectly recorded as Sidney), was born at 54 Greenstreet, Lynsted, in 1895 to James, a self-employed plumber, painter and ironmonger, and mother Alice Maud (née Rickard). James was previously widowed on the death of his first wife, Sarah Ann (née Palmer) with whom he had four children: Henry James, a plumber, painter and journeyman; Christiana Harriet, a parlour maid; Florence May; and Edgar Charles, a painter's apprentice. As well as these four elder half-siblings, Sydney had a younger full sister, Annie Maud Victoria.

Sadly, on 8 June 1905 Sydney's father died. At the time of the 1911 Census his eldest half-brother, Henry, was now head of the household. Sydney was working as an apprentice shipwright.

On 27 April 1913, Sydney's mother married Edwin Hadlow and, along with Sydney, moved to Uplands Farm, Dargate. Sydney now had six step-siblings through the marriage of his widowed mother to Edwin Hadlow. Alice May, Lilian, Sydney Herbert, Frederick Stanley, Clarence Edwin, Cyril Harold and Ivo Stuart.

Wilfred John Gambell

Since the publication of this book on 10 November 2018, more records about Wilfred's military service have now been found. Wilfred's biography begins on page 313 and has been updated to build a much clearer picture. The following is the updated story:

Air Craftsman 2, 337058

Royal Air Force

Died of illness 27 June 1920 Aged 19

Since the publication of “They Shall Grow Not Old” by the Lynsted with Kingsdown Society on 10 November 2018, further records have become available. Notably the Royal Air Force (RAF) have begun to place on-line service records of those who served in the Royal Flying Corp and the RAF. This has enabled us to discover more about Wilfred’s short life.

Wilfred has proved a bit of an enigma and, to a certain extent his records have only been found by chance. Inaccuracies in record keeping and mis-spelling of his name has sent us down many a blind alley. Even the latest records have added another mis-spelling of his surname.

Wilfred was born on 7 April 1901 at Ludgate Farm, Lynsted, the youngest of David and Mary Ann Gambell’s three sons. Wilfred’s oldest brother was Herbert, whose story we told earlier in the book; his other brother Sydney survived the war.

By the time of Wilfred’s christening in Lynsted Church on 28 April 1901, we meet the first mis-recording of his name. The christening records have recorded his name, and that of his parents, as “Gambrill”. The 1911 Census has been transcribed incorrectly, giving Wilfred’s middle initial as “G” rather than “J”. The original record quite clearly shows a “J”. At this time Wilfred was living at Radfield Cottages, Bapchild. Towards the end of the war the Gambell family moved to Wanstell Cottages, Greenstreet, Lynsted.

Wilfred appears on the Lynsted Memorial as serving in the Royal Air Force (RAF). Our original research was unable to confirm any details of his service. He certainly did not appear in the RAF Muster list. We knew that, by rights, Wilfred would not have been eligible for call up until his 18th birthday in April 1919. However, we knew that both his older brothers had joined up under age and there was no knowing whether he had followed in their footsteps.

Through chance, we came across RAF records for a Wilfred John “Campbell”, which proved to be a third mis-recording of the surname.

These discovered records confirmed his date of birth as 7 April 1901 in Ludgate, Lynsted, Kent. It also recorded his mother as M “Cambell”. We now know that Wilfred worked as a labourer prior to his enlistment when he stood 5ft 7 inches tall, with brown hair and blue eyes, and marked out as having a very good character.

Wilfred enlisted on 3 September 1919. Records do not show whether this was conscription or voluntary*. We now know that Wilfred’s service in the RAF started at Henlow, Bedfordshire, aged 18 years and 5 months. His service number was 337058 and his rank Air Craftsman 2 (AC2). The rank of AC2 was introduced to the RAF in January 1919, replacing the rank prefixes of “Air Mechanic”, “Private” and “Clerk” that had been introduced under Air Memorandum No 1 in March 1918.



RAF Henlow under construction in WW1



Wilfred John Gambell (cont)

Henlow was chosen as a military aircraft repair depot in 1917. Originally a repair depot for aircraft from the Western Front. The Station officially opened on 18 May 1918.

Just 6 days after enlistment, Wilfred was posted to Uxbridge on 9 September 1919. Around this time RAF Uxbridge had become increasingly busy since becoming No. 1 Recruitment Training Depot in August 1919. The station had been split to form two new RAF stations, Uxbridge and Hillingdon. The RAF School of Music moved to RAF Uxbridge from Hampstead in September 1919.

Unfortunately, on 17 April 1920, after just 8 months of service Wilfred was admitted to the Ministry of Pensions Hospital in Orpington** suffering from nephritis. On 29 April 1920, just twelve days after his admission, he was officially discharged from the RAF due to disability. Two months later, on 27 June 1920, Wilfred died. His death certificate records his surname under a fourth variation — “Gamble”. Wilfred was recorded as an “Army Pensioner - General Labourer” and his cause of death was nephritis.

Wilfred’s death is not acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Although his death occurred during the qualifying period (4 August 1914 to 31 August 1921), his was not an illness caused or exacerbated by military service. Wilfred had not entered a “theatre of war” so he was not eligible for service medals.

Investigations are ongoing to find Wilfred’s final resting place.

His death was announced in the East Kent Gazette on 17 July 1920:

DEATHS: GAMBELL – On June 27, 1920, at Orpington Ministry Pension Hospital, Wilfred John Gambell, youngest son of Mr and Mrs David Gambell, Greenstreet, aged 19 years.

On 30 June 1920, for the loss of 2 sons, Wilfred and Herbert, Mary Gambell was awarded 10 shillings (50p) a week for life. In today’s money this amounts to approximately £25 a week.

* The end of Conscription

An exact date for the end of conscription into the services is difficult to pin down.

In November 1918, the Secretaries of the Local Government Board and the Ministry of National Service made the following statement:

Questions have been raised in connection with the announcement by the Government that all recruiting under the Military Service Acts is to be suspended as to the position of men who have been granted by tribunals’ conditional certificates of exemption from military service.

While recruiting under the Military Service Acts has been suspended, these Acts remain in force in case necessity should arise for bringing them again into operation. A man, therefore, who holds a conditional exemption and who ceases to fulfil the conditions on which the certificate was granted would be liable to be called up for service in the event of a resumption of recruiting under the Military Service Act, subject to the right (under new regulations for tribunals about to be made) of applying for renewal of exemption within seven days of the issue of a public notice of the resumption of recruiting under the Military Service Acts.

The same considerations apply to voluntarily attested men who have been granted conditional exemption by a tribunal.

The General Election held on 14 December 1918 (known as the “Khaki Election”) was won on 3 pledges:

- the Kaiser be put on trial
- a payment by Germany of an indemnity
- the abolition of conscription

By 1920 not one of the pledges had come to fruition. The House of Commons Hansard of 20 May 1920 recorded the following:

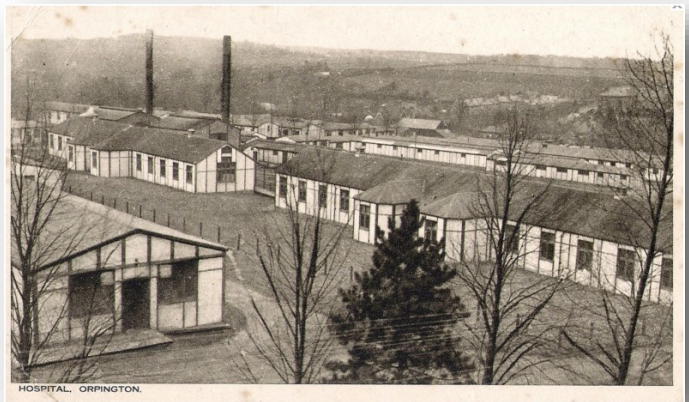
Mr. Lunn asked the Secretary of State for War and Air whether the Military Service Acts, 1916 to 1918, have lapsed or have been repealed; and, if not, whether the Government will introduce immediately a Bill for their repeal?

Mr. Churchill: THE ANSWER TO THE FIRST PART OF THE QUESTION IS IN THE NEGATIVE. With regard to the latter part, it is not considered necessary to introduce a Bill repealing the Military Service Acts, as orders have been issued for all conscripts to be released, and the Military Service Acts will automatically lapse on the official termination of the war.

At that time the “official termination of the War,” had not been determined. Although the Treaty of Versailles (the Peace Treaty) had been signed in on 28 June 1919. The British ratified the Treaty on 27 November 1919 when the King agreed that the official end of the war would be the date the Treaty was signed. Other Allied Countries (but not the USA) ratified the Treaty in 1920.

**** The Ministry of Pensions Hospital Orpington**

Wilfred’s place of death was the Ministry of Pensions Hospital in Orpington. The hospital was originally the Ontario Military Hospital; inaugurated by the Government of Ontario in February 1916 for the care of Canadian troops in camps in England or actively engaged at the front in France. The 70-acre site was chosen as it lay 15 miles from London and near the main South-Eastern railway line from Dover to Folkestone. Although the majority of the patients were Canadian, troops from Britain and the British Empire - Newfoundland (then a British colony), Australia, New Zealand - as well as from the Allied forces were also received. In September 1917, the Hospital was reorganised and renamed the No. 16 Canadian General Hospital.



Ministry of Pensions Hospital, Orpington

By January 1919 more than 25,000 wounded troops had been treated at the Hospital. Only 182 (less than 1%) died; most are buried in the 'Canadian Corner' of the nearby All Saints' Church graveyard.

The Hospital was finally demobilised on 20 September 1919, when it came under the control of the Ministry of Pensions.



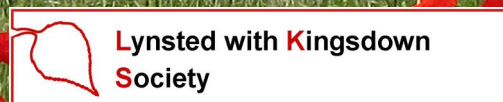
Wilfred John Gambell (cont)

Ministry of Pensions hospitals were not military hospitals, though some of them had been during the war. When the war ended, the number of sick and disabled ex-servicemen was too great a burden for the civilian hospitals. Some hospitals were opened under the direction of the Ministry of Pensions (rather than the War Office) for ex-servicemen who needed ongoing care on either a permanent/intermittent/temporary basis. Now staffed by the Ministry of Pensions Nursing Service, it then provided treatment and care for 1,000 disabled ex-servicemen and “medical” patients. Patients included those suffering from heart disease, tuberculosis, bronchitis, asthma etc.

*On the centenary of the First World War we commemorate the men from the
Parish of Lynsted with Kingsdown in Kent who gave their lives.*

*Of the thirty seven men we commemorate in this book, twenty three have no known
grave and two are missing from the memorial in
the Church of St Peter & St Paul, Lynsted.*

It is hoped recording their stories acts as a fitting memorial to



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